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Welcome

The stories of the kings and queens of Britain prove that **individuals can change the course of history**.

They have united and divided, commanded and conquered, been **loved and despised** by their people. Some are seen as heroes – Alfred the Great (p15), Elizabeth I and Victoria (p102) – while others seem destined to be **less fondly remembered** – John (p46) and Anne (p93) to name a few.

In this special edition from the makers of *History Revealed* magazine, we explore the **reigns and personalities** of the men and women who knew what it meant to **wear the crown**. Who can deny that the most endlessly fascinating among them are the Tudors – we ask **who was the bloodiest?** (p66)

Don't forget, though, history's not just about monarchs. Read about other fascinating characters in history **every month in History Revealed**.

Paul

Paul McGuinness
editor@historyrevealed.com

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Editor Paul McGuinness
Production Editor Alicea Francis
Staff Writer Alice Barnes-Brown
Writers Tracy Borman, Mark Glancy, Lottie Goldfinch, Julian Humphrys, Jem Roberts, Tom Symmons, Carl Watkins, Jonny Wilkes

ART
Art Editor Sheu-Kuei Ho
Designer Jane Gollner
Picture Editor Rosie McPherson

PRESS & PR
Communications Manager Dominic Lobley 020 7150 5015
dominic.lobley@immediate.co.uk

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Advertisement Manager Sam Jones
0117 314 8847
sam.jones@immediate.co.uk
Brand Sales Executive Sam Evanson
0117 314 8754
sam.evanson@immediate.co.uk
Subscriptions Director Jacky Perales-Morris
Senior Direct Marketing Executive Natalie Lawrence

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager Helen Seymour

PRODUCTION
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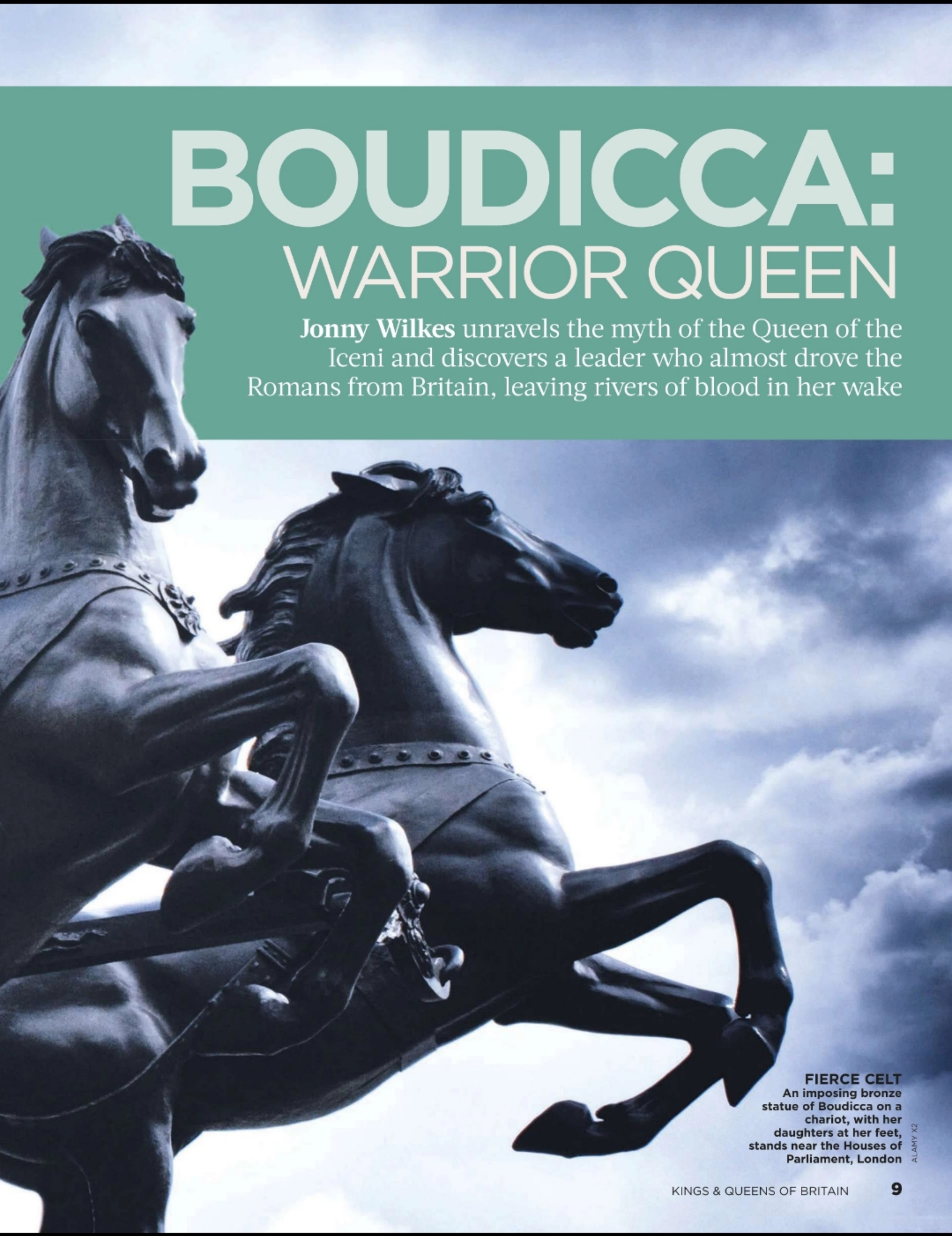
BOUDICCA: WARRIOR QUEEN

Jonny Wilkes unravels the myth of the Queen of the Iceni and discovers a leader who almost drove the Romans from Britain, leaving rivers of blood in her wake

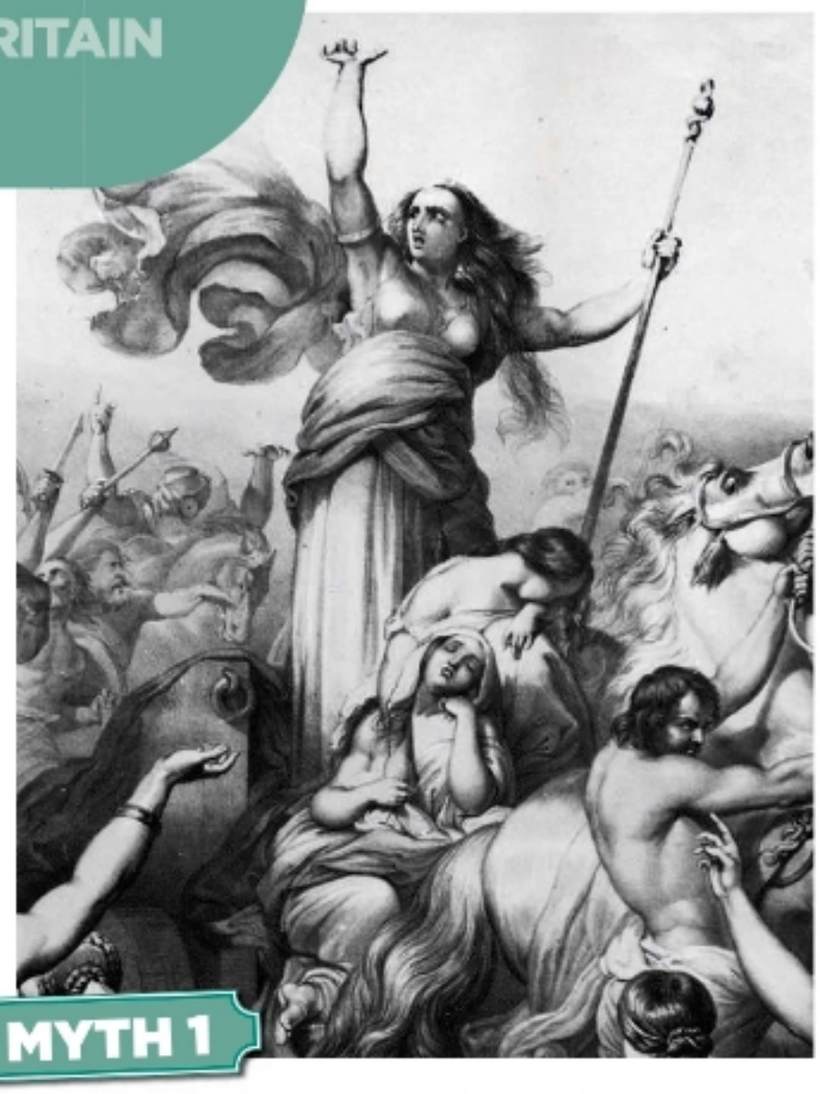


FIERCE CELT
An imposing bronze statue of Boudicca on a chariot, with her daughters at her feet, stands near the Houses of Parliament, London

ALAMY X2

BEHIND BOUDICCA'S MYTHS...

We rely on two Roman historians, Tacitus and Cassius Dio, for nearly all of the information we have on the Iceni Queen Boudicca. Tacitus is the more reliable of the two – as a Roman Senator, he had access to archive material and his father-in-law held a senior military position in Britain at the time of the revolt. Cassius Dio, meanwhile, was writing over 100 years later and leant heavily on Tacitus's writings for his own account. How much of what we know of Boudicca can be trusted?



MYTH 1

HER FIERCE APPEARANCE

Boudicca is invariably depicted as a red-haired warrior clutching a spear. The only record of her look comes from Cassius Dio: "In stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye most fierce, and her voice was harsh... a great mass of the tawniest hair fell to her hips, around her neck was a large golden necklace, and she wore a tunic of divers colours over which a thick mantle was fastened with a brooch."

Standing on her wooden chariot, the Queen of the Iceni looks out to her enemy, statuesque in formation across the field. The Queen cannot completely hide the flicker of doubt and fear she feels looking at 10,000 disciplined and experienced Roman soldiers, strong behind their wall of shields. The foe has chosen its battleground well. The Romans have taken position in front of a dense wood so there is no chance of them being ambushed from behind. With trees on both sides as well, the field is narrow so the Queen's substantially larger numbers count for nothing.

But then Boudicca, the Iceni Queen, turns to the tens of thousands of warriors that have followed her to this battle – her undefeated army. Their faces are painted with patterns of blue woad to call upon the gods to instil them with strength and courage, their clenched fists punch the air, swords and spears clatter against shields and the cacophony of their battle cries is deafening as they eagerly await the order to charge. Having endured much at the hands of the invaders, now is the time for Boudicca's vengeance and to make the Romans regret that they ever came to Britain. With one last look at her frenzied warriors, Boudicca senses the blood lust growing within her, and she lets out a mighty roar.

Boudicca's revolt of AD 60 came close to driving the Romans out of Britain, only 17 years after the occupation began. But her actions, and her fate at the Battle of Watling Street, were forgotten for well over a millennium.

CRUELTY TO THE CELTS

If not for the unearthing of two Roman accounts during the Renaissance, we would know nearly nothing about Boudicca. How much of the works of historians Tacitus and Cassius Dio can be trusted is debatable – they wrote decades after Boudicca's death – but their discovery placed Boudicca back into history. Under the Victorians, she became a national symbol, hailed as a queen on a par with Victoria herself.

The story of why Boudicca waged war against the Romans begins in present-day Norfolk.

Since AD 43, when Claudius's conquest of Britain began, Boudicca's tribe, the Iceni, lived in relative peace with the invaders. Prasutagus, King of the Iceni and Boudicca's husband, signed a treaty, swearing his tribe's loyalty to Rome in return for remaining nominally independent. When he died in AD 60, however, the arrangement collapsed. Although Boudicca assumed leadership, the Romans refused to recognise the authority of a woman, and began plundering Iceni land of its valuables and people. But this, as Boudicca would discover, was only the beginning of Rome's insult.

A commanding woman of royal blood trained in fighting and chariot riding, the tall, flame-haired Boudicca is described by Dio: "She was huge of frame, terrifying of aspect, and with a harsh voice." When the Iceni fell victim to Roman brutality, she was outraged, but her appeals to the Roman Procurator, Catus Decianus, only made matters worse. As a potent act of Roman power, and complete humiliation for the Iceni, he reportedly had her flogged and her daughters raped.

Left bloodied, humiliated and burning with pure hatred, Boudicca was hell-bent on only one thing: retaliation. She quickly mobilised

WINSTON CHURCHILL, ON BOUDICCA'S REVOLT

"Probably the most horrible episode our island has known. We see the crude and corrupt beginning of a higher civilisation blotted out by the ferocious uprising of the native tribes."

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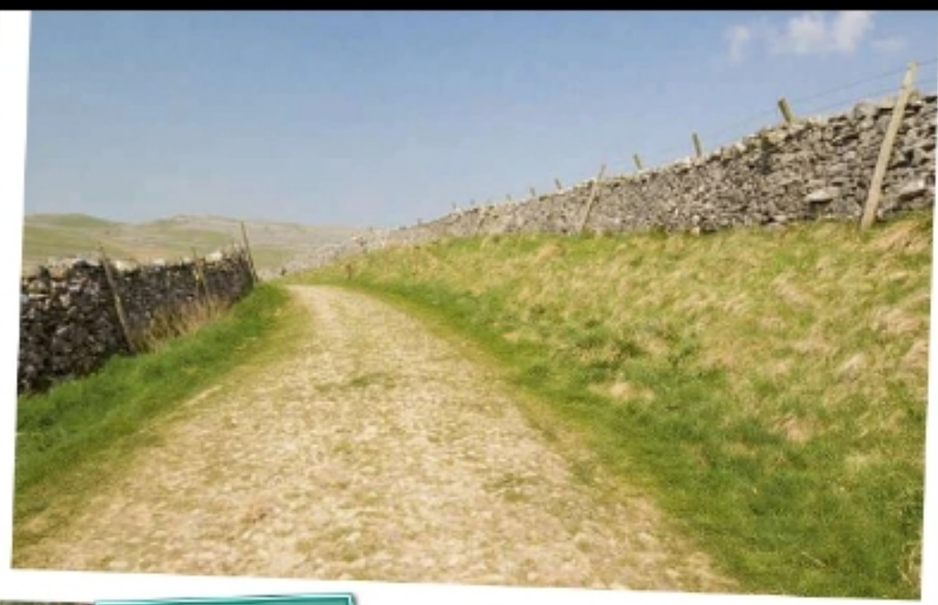


MYTH 3

WHAT HAPPENED AT WATLING STREET?

Both Tacitus and Cassius give accounts of Boudicca's disastrous last battle, but there are few clues as to where the fighting actually took place. Cassius Dio's claim that Boudicca led 230,000 warriors along with the assertion by Tacitus that only 400 Romans died, were most likely exaggerations to make the Roman victory look more impressive.

MYTH 2

FATE OF HER DAUGHTERS

According to Tacitus, the powerful Roman Catus Decianus had Boudicca flogged and her two daughters raped. Nothing else is known about them – from their involvement in their mother's revolt, what happened to them and even their names.

her warriors and even formed an alliance with the neighbouring Trinovantes, old enemies of the Iceni. Tens of thousands of men and women joined Boudicca as they marched the 50 miles to their first target, the Roman city of Camulodonum (now Colchester). Built as a supposed beacon of civilisation, the settlement was a symbol of oppression for Britons, not least because a new temple honouring Emperor Claudius was erected using money raised through enforced taxation. The city had no fortifications and few soldiers stationed to protect the inhabitants. The recently appointed Governor of Britain, a cruel and ambitious general named Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, was 350 miles away with the 14th and 20th Legions, squashing a druid rebellion on the Island of Mona in northern Wales.

Boudicca's revenge was fierce. Camulodonum was put to the torch and all Romans inside were butchered as her onslaught expunged all evidence that a city ever existed. Everything was looted, every building destroyed and Romans were not only killed, but disembowelled. Even those taking refuge in the temple were locked inside and consumed by fire.

Boudicca had no time to enjoy her first victory, as a messenger from Camulodonum had made it to the 9th Legion, stationed to the north, pleading for assistance. Without understanding the scale of the revolt, 2,000 soldiers hastily marched to relieve the city only to be met by Boudicca's warriors, hidden in the trees at the side of the road. The 9th Legion was overwhelmed, with the infantry almost annihilated. Only a handful escaped. Boudicca saw how her army could take on highly disciplined Roman soldiers, and win.

Suetonius got word of the brutal attack on Camulodonum and rushed down the now-lost Roman road of Watling Street to Londinium (London), where he predicted Boudicca would strike next. His guess was accurate. Boudicca's forces made their way to the thriving port, packed with traders and precious loot. Basking in victory, they enjoyed the journey by pillaging small settlements, both Roman and Celtic, along the way. This gave Suetonius – who had ridden ahead of his soldiers – the time needed to reach Londinium. But like Camulodonum, the city was unfortified and ill defended. Suetonius couldn't wait for his main force to arrive, so he took the decision to abandon and evacuate Londinium and regroup. This meant leaving thousands helpless to Boudicca's wrath.

Boudicca saw how her army could take on highly disciplined Roman soldiers, and win.

The city suffered a fate worse than Camulodonum. The people were mutilated and the entire city was torched until nothing remained standing – the inferno lasted days. To give an idea of how complete and merciless the destruction of Londinium was, evidence of Boudicca's attack can still be found in the earth of London today; dig deep enough and you will find a thick layer of ash, all that Boudicca left of the old Londinium.

The flames of Boudicca's revolt continued to sweep across the southeast of England. Her forces raided a third city, Verulamium (present-day St Albans), and more and more Britons joined the throngs. Having killed 80,000 people, both Roman and fellow Britons, when they prepared to meet Suetonius and his 10,000 soldiers somewhere along Watling Street, they felt invincible.

BATTLE COMMENCES

When the battle came – the site is unknown – the two armies could not have looked more different. On one side, Boudicca's anarchic,

IN CONTEXT

UNDER ROME

In AD 43, the Roman conquest of Britain began on the command of Emperor Claudius, although Romans had been forming trade links since the first expeditions of Julius Caesar 90 years earlier. A foothold was established and, gradually, the Romans progressed northwards, dealing with individual tribes as they went. The concept of 'Britain' didn't actually exist – there was no united country, rather a collection of warring Celtic tribes, each with their own language, culture and beliefs.

The Romans controlled a tribe in two ways: they either brought them into the fold using treaties, or forced obedience at the points of their swords. Boudicca's tribe, the Iceni in East Anglia, opted to sign a peace treaty and become a 'client kingdom'. In doing so, they maintained a degree of independence from Roman rule, while avoiding destruction at the hands of the Roman army. The peace lasted until the King of the Iceni Prasutagus, Boudicca's husband, died. He had hoped to prolong the peace by dividing his lands equally between the Emperor, now Nero, and his two daughters, but the Romans ignored his will.

"If you weigh well the strength of the armies, and the causes of the war, you will see that in this battle you must conquer or die. This is a woman's resolve; as for men, they may live and be slaves."

Boudicca

CELTIC CHAOS V ROMAN RESOLVE
Boudicca's warriors had no armour or battle formation, whereas the Romans were disciplined, professional soldiers

BATTLE TACTICS

WHY THE ROMANS WON

The Battle of Watling Street may not have been as one-sided as the accounts of Tacitus and Cassius Dio implied, but the Romans secured an imperious victory through strict discipline and precision-execution of the army's military tactics.

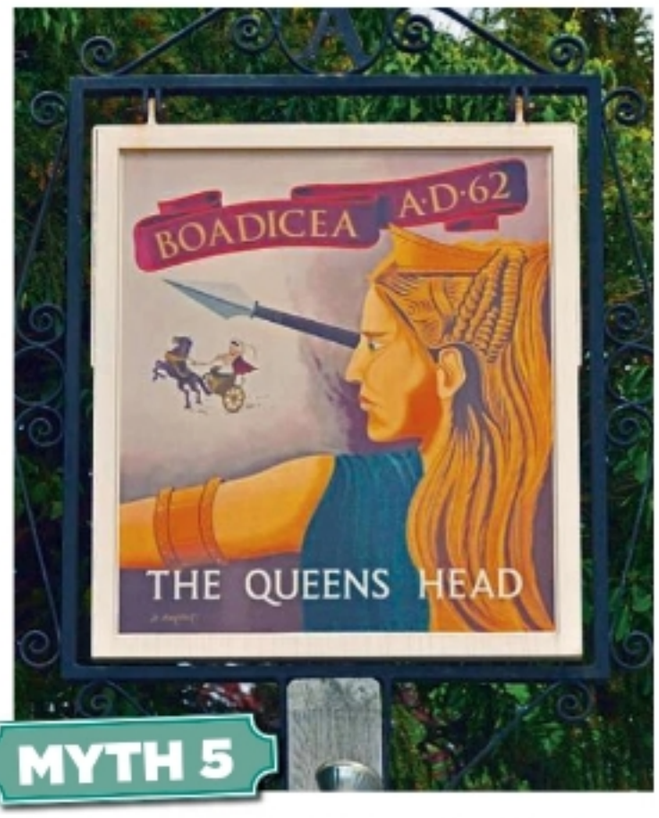
The Celtic warriors led by Boudicca had nothing in the way of armour and they used whatever weapons they could, whereas every one of the 10,000 Romans wore steel armour – made of flexible strips to allow for manoeuvrability – and a helmet. Their sandals had nails on the soles so they didn't slip in the mud. Armed with spears and short swords, the Romans had the advantage in equipment and skill, but there was always the chance that Boudicca's greater numbers would overwhelm them.

But Roman discipline was resolute. Volleys of spears repelled Boudicca's first charge, and when the two opposing forces collided, the Roman shield wall was impenetrable. The masterstroke of Roman tactics then came into play – by continually rotating the soldiers on the front line of the formation, the Romans could last longer without tiring. Each soldier fought for a few minutes and was replaced by the next man. The Celts were powerless against such ruthless efficiency.

MYTH 4

THE QUEEN IS DEAD

On Boudicca's ultimate fate, the two Roman historians differ. Tacitus's account states that Boudicca, to avoid capture, took her own life by swallowing poison. This seems more plausible than Cassius Dio's account that she fell ill and died of natural causes as, after the battle, the Romans hunted down the surviving Iceni.



MYTH 5

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Over the centuries, the Iceni Queen has been called many things. Tacitus used 'Boudicca' – meaning 'victory' – but a poor translation of his work led to the use of the name 'Boadicea' and even 'Boudeg'.

MYTH 6

QUEEN'S FINAL RESTING PLACE AT KING'S CROSS

In his 1937 book *Boadicea: Warrior Queen of the Britons*, Lewis Spence suggested, with no substantial evidence, that the Battle of Watling Street was fought on land now under King's Cross station in London. There is no reason to believe Boudicca is buried there, but as the site of the battle is a mystery, the legend has grown.

noisy horde of painted tribesmen and women had no armour and most carried scavenged weapons. On the other, the silent ranks of armour-clad Roman soldiers moved as one unit. Suetonius was supremely confident his men had the technical advantage, but that did not stop doubt from spreading as they stared at the chaos across the plain.

Cassius Dio claimed that Boudicca led 230,000 warriors. The number is most likely exaggerated, but there is no question her force was significantly larger. Boudicca gave the signal and her chariots hurtled towards the Roman line, but her numbers counted for nothing as the trees on either side forced her warriors to bottleneck. They were instantly met by volleys of nearly 10,000 *pila*, or javelins, which caused havoc among the bare-skinned warriors. By the time the forces collided, Boudicca had already lost severe numbers, and things got worse when they tried to break through the Roman shield wall. Britons smashed into the large shields only to be halted and slashed by the Roman short swords. Wave after wave were cut down with little damage to the Roman line.

The Romans advanced until bodies of both warriors and spectators littered the ground.

ROMAN ROUT

Content with his soldiers' defence, Suetonius ordered a great offensive push to finish off Boudicca's panicked and ever-reducing horde. He called for a wedge formation, an impenetrable human tank, which broke the last strand of resistance among the Britons. They turned to flee, but there was nowhere to go. At the time, carts full of a tribe's families and even cattle would commonly accompany warriors to battle so they could enjoy the carnage. These spectators lined the battlefield, making retreat impossible. The Romans continued their relentless advance until bodies of both warriors and spectators alike littered the ground. The result was a resounding victory for Suetonius and the shocking end of Boudicca's revolt. Tacitus claimed 80,000 Britons died, compared to just 400 Romans. Whatever the actual figures, the Battle of Watling Street was a bloodbath.

As for Boudicca, accounts differ. Dio wrote that she escaped and died later of illness, but Tacitus claimed she took poison to avoid capture, dying shortly after her humiliating defeat.

HERO OR VILLAIN

Boudicca and her revolt made Emperor Nero question Roman presence in Britain, but after it was quashed, the Romans improved their defences and treated the Britons far more warily. Their caution ensured that the invaders never faced such a threat again for the next 350 years.

To some, Boudicca was a noble leader who fought an oppressive, imperialist force, but to others, she was nothing more than a vicious savage willing to kill thousands in a personal vendetta. Her story's ability to divide people is summed up perfectly by the famous bronze statue of her erected in the Victorian era near the Houses of Parliament in London. With Boudicca on a large chariot arms raised, the statue celebrates British imperialism – the very concept she fought against – and stands in the city she once burned to the ground.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How should Boudicca be treated by history: as a cold-blooded killer or a brave fighter against oppression?

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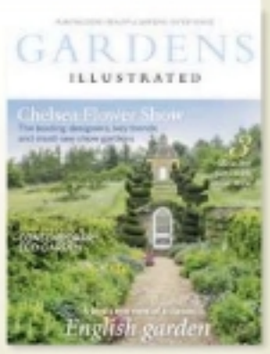
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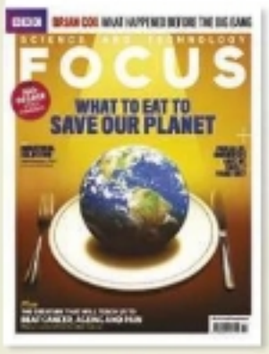
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TRUE COLOURS
Alfred immortalised in a stained-glass window at Winchester Cathedral. Winchester was both the capital of Wessex and where Alfred died in 889

ALFRED THE GREAT

Largely remembered for his lapses in the kitchen, the Saxon king was actually the saviour of his people and should be saluted as such, says **Jem Roberts**

ALAMY X2

All heroic figures have to have nadirs to fight back from, adversity to overcome – and there's a reason that the Saxon King Alfred is the only English ruler ever to be popularly known as 'The Great'. The one thing that most people think of when his name is mentioned is the burning of the cake. True or not, it comes from Alfred's time of greatest struggle – as a battle-beaten guerilla hiding out in the marshlands of the Somerset Levels, with any hope of victory over the usurping Danes seemingly lost.

Overturning this desperate state, and forging some kind of peace with the Danes, must surely be Alfred's greatest achievement. But there was one greater masterstroke in Alfred's reign, the main reason we still celebrate his successes over 1,100 years later. He was the first of our rulers to commission his own biography, written during his lifetime by the Welsh bishop Asser. Understanding the value of good propaganda was just one of Alfred's many smart moves in his 28 tumultuous years as leader of Wessex.

THE WISE ELF

Long celebrated as a king who ruled more with his brain than by bloodlust, Alfred's very name means 'wise elf'. The importance of education, and things higher than victory in battle, was impressed on him at a very young age, when his father Æthelwulf went on pilgrimage to Rome in 853 and took his four-year-old youngest son with him. The example of the Roman church stayed with Alfred, who would fight for a more civilised form of government, firmly built on Christian piety, for the rest of his life. No chronicler, however, claims that Alfred was built for warfare, and his life was plagued by ailments now thought to stem from the excruciating bowel disorder, Chron's disease.

Æthelwulf had his work cut out on his return to Britain to avoid civil war when his elder son Æthelbald refused to give up his regency. But, ultimately, both father and son died within a couple of years, with Wessex passing to the next brother in line, Æthelbehrt. Five years later, in 865, his death gave Alfred's closest brother Æthelred the crown and, in the same year the Vikings arrived, led by the terrifying Ivar the Boneless.

Over the next five years, the invading Danes bloodily took hold of northern kingdoms including Northumbria and East Anglia, and at the start of 871 – 'the year of nine battles' – Æthelred suffered a humiliating defeat against them at Reading. With the King ailing, and further attacks on Wessex expected, only four days later the Battle of Ashdown in Berkshire had to be led by the King's 22-year-old younger brother, Alfred.

Although never a warlord in the mould of his pagan adversaries, the cerebral prince was said to have ridden to a perforated sarsen stone (a large boulder, as used at Stonehenge), known as the 'Blowing Stone', and used it to summon the people from miles around to defend their lands

HAPPY COUPLE
ABOVE: **King Alfred with his wife Ealhswith, with whom he had several children** LEFT: **The Great Heathen Army takes to the seas**

TIMELINE

Born fourth in line to the throne, Alfred rose to earn the 'Great' addition to his name

853 ROMAN HOLIDAY
As little more than a toddler, the youngest son of King Aethelwulf experiences the opulence of the Roman Church, as it was in the late first millennium. He is inspired to live up to a Christian ideal for the rest of his life, fighting and even converting the Danish invaders.

868 TEENAGE MARRIAGE
The 19-year-old Alfred is married to Ealhswith, the daughter of Æthelred Mucil, an influential Mercian nobleman. They have several children together, despite the many disruptions of the coming years.

870 DANES ATTACK
The Viking invaders, who arrived in East Anglia five years previously, reach Wessex. Alfred and his brother King Æthelred fight many battles in the ensuing months, the last coinciding with the King's early death and Alfred taking the reins of this endangered Saxon society.

878 NO MR KIPLING
When his court is attacked, Alfred has to learn a new way of life as a guerrilla fighter in the Somerset marshes. This gives way to the tale of the burning of the cakes. A woman took him into her home and asked him to watch her baking, but the King was so fixated on battle plans, he ruined the supper.

878 EDINGTON
Alfred's long run of bad luck is turned around by a popular victory at Edington in Wiltshire, after which his nemesis Guthrum submits to Christian baptism.

ALAMY X2, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X2, GETTY X4

EQUINE OF THE TIMES
ABOVE: **Wiltshire's White Horse is believed to commemorate Alfred's victory at Edington** LEFT: **The Blowing Stone, now a feature of an Oxfordshire garden**

"He overthrew the Pagans with great slaughter, and smiting the fugitives, he pursued them as far as the fortress"

Alfred's biographer Asser

against the invaders. The success of the ensuing battle, however, was short lived, and further defeats followed before the month was over. By Easter, Æthelred was dead and Alfred had inherited the beseiged Kingdom of Wessex.

TO PLAY THE KING

Even while Alfred was arranging his brother's funeral, the Danes continued to stage attacks on Wessex and, by May, he was forced to pay the Great Heathen Army to withdraw to Mercian London. Peace, however, was brief. The Danes, under their new leader Guthrum, were soon to be found pillaging Dorset, breaking an oath of peace made in the name of Thor, before withdrawing with their spoils to Exeter.

Despite being on their guard, however, the English forces had a surprise in store in January 878. Chippenham was a royal court, Alfred's home, and the pious King was celebrating Twelfth Night when Guthrum's forces attacked, laying waste to everyone they found, unprepared, with many forces away for the yule period. Alfred had been married to a Mercian noblewoman, Ealhswith, ten years earlier, and already had at least two children including the four-year-old future King Edward the Elder. Thankfully they were spared the Danish butchery. Alfred, however, with what little retinue survived, had to escape and plan his revenge.

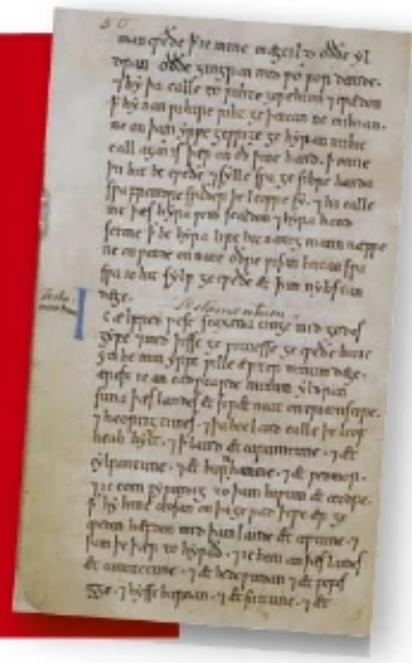
The year 878 is seen as the lowpoint of Saxon England, with the Danes now in charge of all kingdoms. Alfred created a fort on the central Somerset Isle of Athelney, 60 miles southwest of Chippenham, and plotted. His old strategy of buying off the Danes was no longer an option.Only all-out victory in battle would suffice.

In early May, Alfred rode to Egbert's Stone, and called a levy to bring together the remaining forces of Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire that were still loyal to him and create a force that could easily crush Guthrum's men in battle.

Accordingly, where the village of Edington in Wiltshire now stands, a bloody battle commenced, as Asser later reported: "Fighting ferociously, forming a dense shield-wall against the whole army of the Pagans, and striving long and bravely... at last he gained the victory. He overthrew the Pagans with great slaughter, and smiting the fugitives, he pursued them as far as the fortress." The White

893 ASSER'S BIOGRAPHY
Perhaps the King's greatest masterstroke of all is commissioning his own biography, to be written by Bishop Asser, one of the most learned English scholars of the day. The eventual *The Life Of King Alfred* is an almost unique achievement in this time of rudimentary historical documentation.

899 ALFRED'S DEATH
On 26 October, the 50-year-old King Alfred dies, safe in the knowledge that he has given his life to the preservation of the Saxon way of life.



KING'S RANSOM
Alfred's will, after his death in 899

BURNING THE CAKES

THE ORIGINAL BAKE-OFF

While Alfred commissioned his own biography, all that hard work could easily be undone by one imaginative later writer hoping to add to the legend. Most people who hear the name of Alfred the Great will automatically leap to the story of him burning the cakes, and yet the tale was never recorded until the 12th century (along with another tale of the King stealing into the Danish camp disguised as a minstrel). Historians are often too quick, however, to discount later details as inventions, when a perfectly plausible event like this can tell us so much about kingship. It may have been a real event, which survived locally through storytelling.

The yarn remains that, after the Danish successes of 878, when Alfred was fighting for his survival guerilla-style in the marshes around Athelney in the central Somerset Levels, he was taken in by a charitable peasant woman and offered shelter on the understanding that, while she went out to search for wood, he was to keep an eyes on the 'cakes' (actually some form of simple bread), which were baking by her fire.

He eagerly agreed, but when his hostess was gone, Alfred was so absorbed with ruminating on how to get back at the Vikings and restore his rule, that the cakes were burned by the time the old woman returned; she forced the King out into the cold with abuse for his foolishness. While this episode said a great deal about the fragility of royalty, the experience never harmed Alfred – his victory was imminent.

As Alfred considered his battle plans, the woman's cakes – or breads, as they actually were – went neglected

ALFRED TODAY

HOW ONE KING'S LEGACY LIVES ON

▼ KING ALFRED'S TOWER

Like many counties, Somerset is littered with follies, but King Alfred's Tower, in Brewham in the south east of the county, is more than a typical rich man's whim. Built between 1769-72 to mark George III's coronation, the site was chosen by banker Henry Hoare II as the closest suitable site to Egbert's Stone, where Alfred was said to have rallied his force on the eve of the Battle of Edington in May 878.

▲ *ALFRED THE GREAT* – THE 1969 FILM

Alfred was also the inspiration for a strangely under-sung film – certainly, given the richness of its cast and epic nature of the story. Clive Donner, director of *What's New Pussycat?* among others, brought together names like Ian McKellen, Michael York, Peter Vaughan and David Hemmings (in the title role) for a heavily romanticised version of Alfred's story. More recently, Alfred was played by David Dawson in the BBC series *The Last Kingdom*.

▼ WINCHESTER STATUE

The most famous image of Alfred was created a millennium after his death – the great statue in Winchester, which stands at the eastern end of The Broadway, close to the site of the city's medieval East Gate. The statue of a suitably heroic Alfred was designed by the renowned sculpter Hamo Thornycroft and erected in 1899 amid a whole flurry of patriotic celebration of the ever-reinvented Great Saxon unifier.

It is said that if a virgin of 16 walks three times clockwise around Alfred's statue in Winchester, the King will lower his sword.

◀ THE ALFRED JEWEL

One of the most haunting yet beautiful images left to us from Saxon England is the Alfred Jewel, an enamel, quartz and gold likeness minted during the King's lifetime and rediscovered in Somerset in 1693. Bearing the legend "Alfred ordered me made", the jewel shows a clean-faced monarch and is now believed to have been the handle to a pointer made for reading books.

DEBATING CHAMBER
Alfred and his queen attend a meeting of the Witan, a congregation of wise men who would discuss potential new laws

Horse at Westbury is said to commemorate this, Alfred's greatest victory.

Guthrum had fled to his own stronghold, removing all food from them in a sortie. After holding out for two weeks, he submitted to Alfred and the Treaty of Wedmore was agreed. The key demand was that Guthrum be baptised into the Christian Church, taking the name Æthelstan and accepting Alfred as his adopted father. This also marked the establishment of the Danelaw, a formal division of England where the newly christened Æthelstan could happily withdraw, his conversion ensuring that his standing with the people he ruled over would be stronger than ever. He died in East Anglia after 12 years of relative peace.

A TIME TO REBUILD

Alfred was now finally free to rebuild the shattered Wessex cities and to try to forge the kind of kingdom he felt a Christian society demanded. London was carefully redesigned, with some street plans that still hold to this day. The King also issued his own 120-chapter law code, partially dictated by himself and partially based on previous Saxon legal edicts. Or, at least, as he admitted, "those that pleased me – and many of the ones that did not please me, I rejected with the advice of my councillors, and commanded them to be observed in a different way."

Alfred was said to always carry a notebook with him, jotting down prayers and observations that would become useful. The resultant legal document was largely Alfred's own meditation upon Christian law, with extended Biblical translations. Education was seen as central to Alfred's vision of a better England, with court schools established and the furtherance of teaching in the English language. Meanwhile judges were required, for the first time, to be literate and learned before they were allowed in office – even if the fundamental law that underlined the entire disparate collection of rules was the old Saxon requirement, that loyalty to the Lord (Alfred, rather than Jesus) remained paramount.

It would be wrong to depict the late 9th century as a time of peace and rebuilding – and ironically, it was the death of his old enemy Guthrum that caused the trouble, creating a power vacuum that a whole host of Danes were itching to fill. The regular incursions from invaders required the English to develop their own weapons of war – including the design of a new fleet of boats twice the size of the Dane's, an early step towards the country's reputation for naval mastery. This increased force wasn't just for defence either, but for raids on the Danes to fill the royal coffers.

So close to the dawn of a new century and only just 50 years old, King Alfred died of unknown causes on 26 October 899, succeeded by his son Edward, who in turn ruled for 25 years without allowing Alfred's powerbase to fall back to its 878 nadir. Indeed, it would be his son, another Æthelstan, who first managed to reunite all the Saxon Kingdoms, and become truly the first King of England.

In a sign of English policy for centuries to come, very soon the English kings were invading Scotland, and making themselves overlords of the whole of Britain. As for Alfred himself, no more remains of him than of King Arthur – he was buried with fitting majesty in Winchester, before being moved to Hyde Abbey just outside the city in 1110. The graves of Alfred and his family managed to survive Henry VIII's Reformation, but were ultimately scattered in the building of a prison on the site in the 1780s. Today, attempts are afoot to find some remnant of Alfred's body, Richard III-style, but hopes are low of any meaningful identification being made.

But unlike so many of his contemporaries and indeed descendants, Alfred has little need for DNA analysis to be celebrated – as the English nation grew in strength and international power, the Saxon hero grew in reputation, earning the 'Great' soubriquet by the 16th century. Although his story is stirring, it could have been as murky a history as any first millennium ruler, had he not kept his firm faith in the power of the written word, and the English language.

Bishop Asser was the person who gave Alfred true immortality and who allowed his words to stay with us, more than 1,100 years after his death: "I desired to live worthily as long as I lived, and to leave after my life, to the men who should come after me, the memory of me in good works."

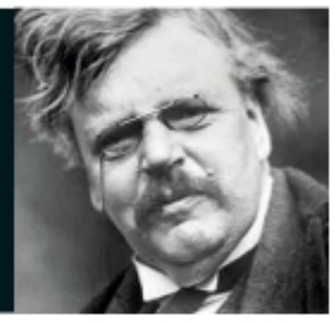
THE GREAT DIVIDE

THE DANELAW

A hard-won peace was only found in Saxon England thanks to the agreement that gave rise to the Danelaw. This determined the portion of the country to be ruled over by the Viking invaders, via English puppet rulers, in return for Alfred's Wessex being safe to the south (not just safe actually, but expanded, with extra lands in the south-east under Saxon rule).

Although never intended as the name of a geographical area, we now know this region to have stretched roughly from the north banks of the Thames up to the River Tees. The simplest way to envisage the region is to imagine a line drawn between London and Chester in the north-west – everything to the east of that line was under the Danelaw. Many areas within the Danelaw region remained largely Saxon, of course, but Viking settlement – and the differences in language, law and culture that came with it – was intensively centred on cities like York, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and Lincoln. Danish roots remain strong in areas like Yorkshire, Newcastle and Essex to this day. For instance, DNA evidence shows that Derby residents still bear strong hereditary connections to Denmark.

GK CHESTERTON on Alfred
"More mighty in defeat was he, than all men else in victory, and behind, his men came murderously..."



WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Does Alfred the Great get his due level of acclaim?
Email: editor@historyrevealed.com

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X4

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

How did William rise from being an illegitimate son to one of the most prominent figures in English history?

ARTISTIC LICENCE

This often-reproduced painting of William was created **towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign**. You can see it today in the National Portrait Gallery.

RISE OF THE CONQUEROR

Julian Humphrys looks at how the illegitimate son of a tanner's daughter defied the odds to become a leading contender for the crown of England

GETTY X3, PRESS ASSOCIATION X1

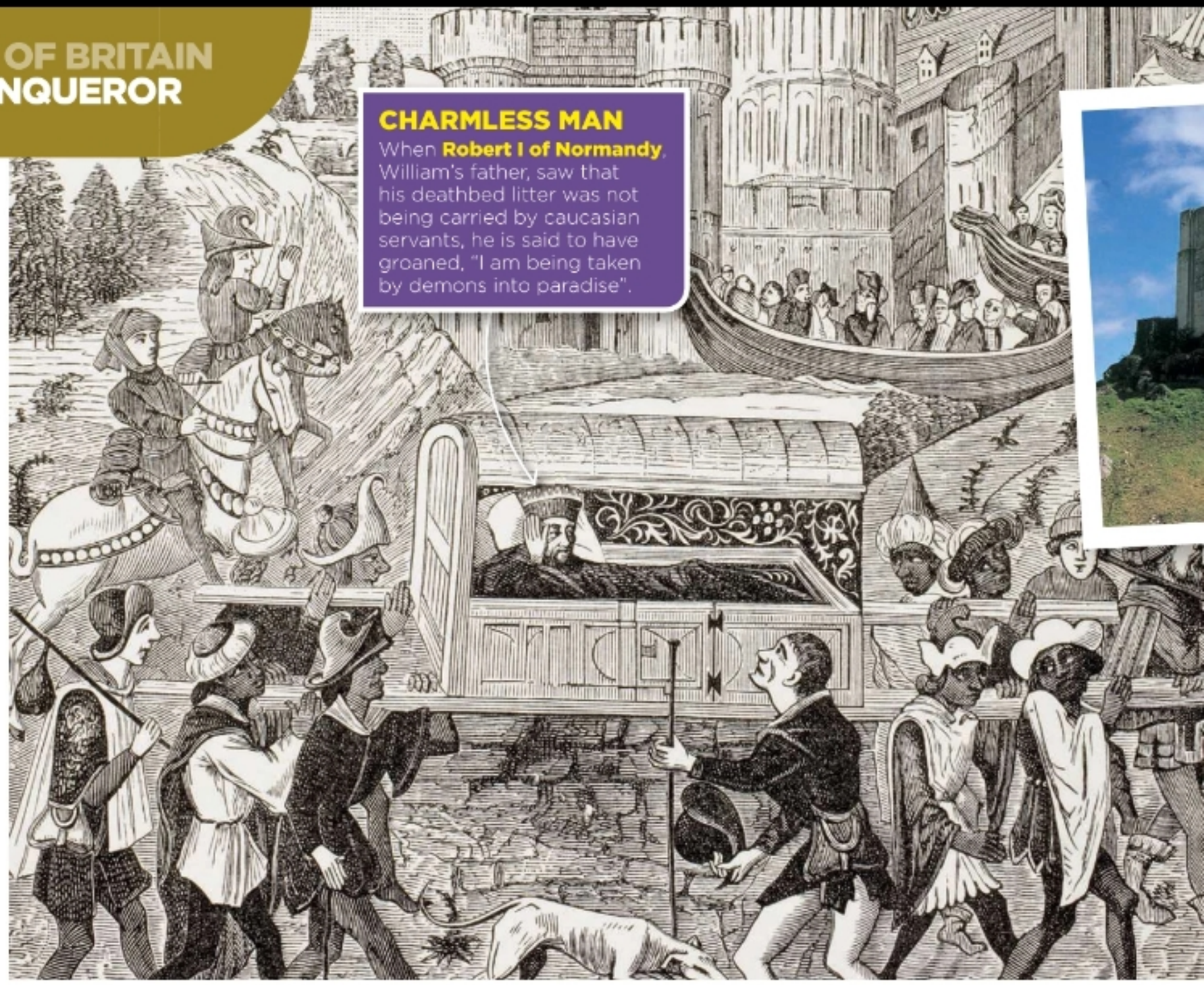
Legend has it that Duke Robert I of Normandy was gazing out from the ramparts of his castle at Falaise when he spotted a mesmerisingly beautiful girl washing clothes in a nearby stream. As the most powerful man in Normandy, Robert was used to getting what he wanted – and he wanted the girl. She was Herleva, the daughter of a local tanner, and in 1027 she presented Duke Robert with a bastard son, who was christened William. Although Robert didn't go so far as to actually marry her, he did show great favour to Herleva and her family. In the end she married one of Robert's knights, Herlun de Conteville, and bore him two sons – Robert, who would become Count of Mortain, and Odo, who would be appointed Bishop of Bayeux. But William, her first-born, would rise even higher.

LEGITIMATE HEIR

As far as Duke Robert was concerned, William's illegitimacy counted for little. Before embarking on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1035, he named the boy as his heir and ensured that he was fully accepted as such by his barons. It should be said that bastardy didn't carry the same stigma that it would in later years, and although William would always be notoriously touchy about the circumstances of his birth, this had more to do with his mother's humble origins. After making doubly sure of William's status by securing his formal recognition as heir by the King of France, Robert set off on his pilgrimage… And then died on the way home.

The elderly Archbishop of Rouen had been appointed as William's guardian, but when he also died in 1037, Normandy descended into anarchy as rival barons fought to gain control of the young duke. "Plots were hatched and rebellions, and all the duchy was ablaze with fire", wrote one chronicler. Robert had also arranged for a number of leading nobles to protect his young successor, but it soon became clear that they were unable to protect themselves, let alone William. Alan of Brittany died at a siege in 1040, his replacement Gilbert of Brionne was murdered while he was out riding and in 1041 William's tutor, Turold, met a similar fate. According to the chronicler Orderic Vitalis, William himself later recalled, "Many times, for fear of my kinsmen, I was smuggled secretly out of the castle by night by my Uncle Walter [a brother of his mother] and taken to the cottages and hiding places of the poor, to save me from discovery by traitors who sought my death". His steward Osbern took to sleeping in William's room to protect him – a precaution that eventually cost him his life. One morning William awoke in Vaudreuil castle to find Osbern lying dead in a pool of blood – his throat had been cut during the night. It was a brutal, dangerous childhood and it undoubtedly shaped the character of the adult duke.

"A brutal, dangerous childhood shaped his character"



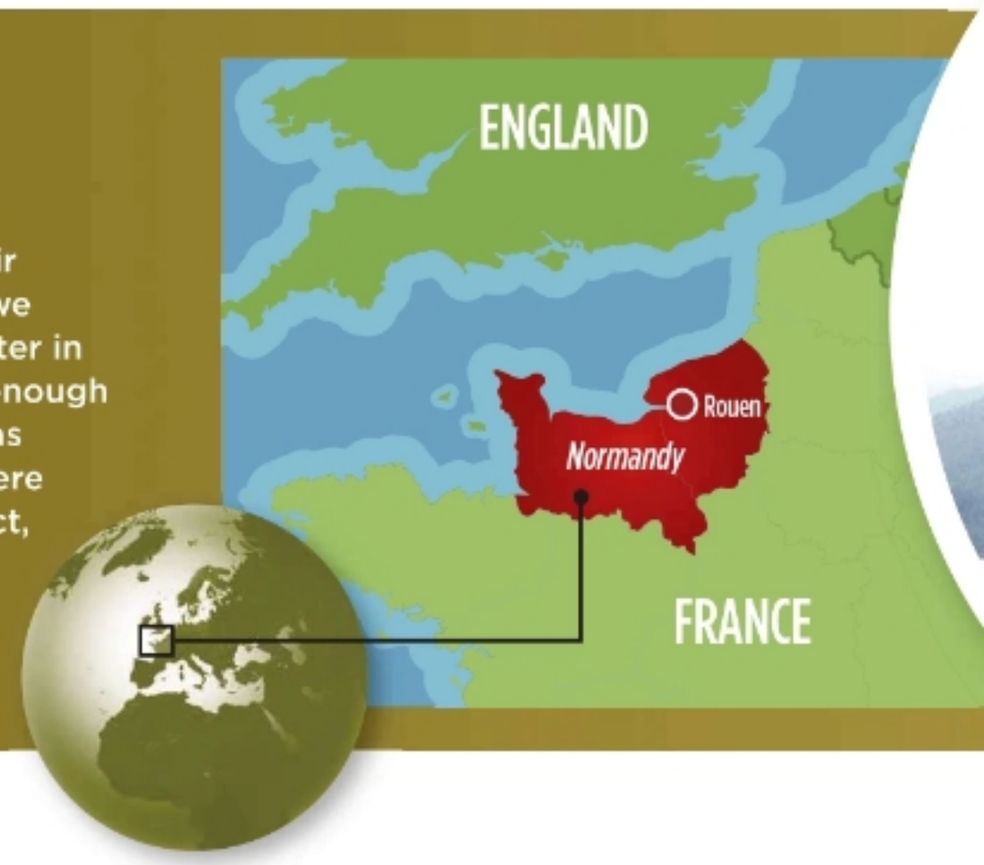
CHARMLESS MAN
When **Robert I of Normandy**, William's father, saw that his deathbed litter was not being carried by caucasian servants, he is said to have groaned, "I am being taken by demons into paradise".

MY OLD MAN
ABOVE: **Robert's death, depicted in a woodcut made at least seven centuries later** ABOVE RIGHT: **Falaise Castle, William's ancestral home in Normandy**

NORMAN WISDOM

Who were the Normans?

During the summers of the eighth and ninth centuries, bands of Vikings sailed in their longships from Scandinavia to plunder England. They also attacked the region that we now call northern France and, after years of seasonal raiding, they began to overwinter in that area. By the early 10th century, one Viking leader, Rollo, had become powerful enough to force the French king to cede him the region around Rouen. This became known as Normandy – 'the country of the Northmen'. The Normans, as they became known, were an adaptable lot. They gradually shed their Viking heritage, adopting a French dialect, converting to Christianity, mastering the art of mounted warfare and marrying into the families of their French and English neighbours. It was through the marriage of Emma, the daughter of Richard I of Normandy, to Ethelred the Unready that her great-nephew William based his flimsy dynastic claim to the English crown.



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Despite the odds stacked against him, William somehow emerged unscathed from the long years of bloodshed and in 1042 he was declared to be of age. Helped by young men like William Fitz Osbern, the son of his murdered steward, he began to assert his authority. But he wasn't out of the woods yet.

REBEL YELL

In 1046, he was faced by a major rebellion, and this one aimed not to control him, but to replace him. The rising was led by his cousin, Guy of Burgundy, and was supported by most of the barons of western Normandy, who resented William's curtailment of their independence. William couldn't have been in a worse place when the revolt broke out, for he was staying at Valognes in the west of his duchy – right in the heart of rebel territory. Warned that he was in danger, the young duke leaped on his horse and rode hell-for-leather eastwards, skirting towns and

DID YOU KNOW?
William made an attempt to learn English when he was crowned, but French became the language of English nobility.

NORSE INVASION
In essence, 1066 was just one more Viking triumph over England

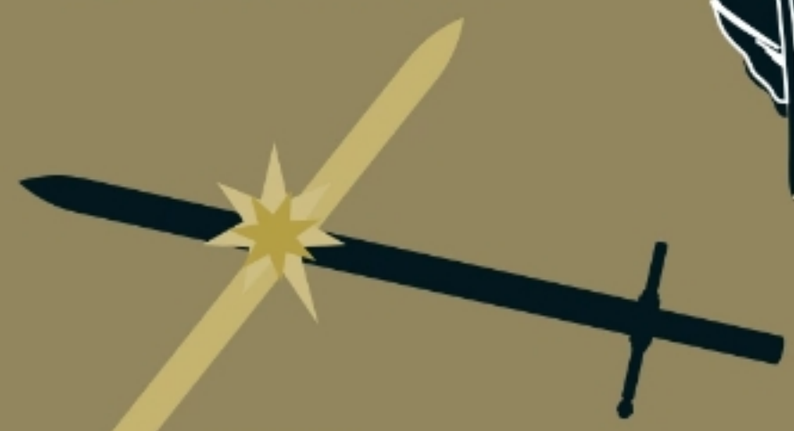
WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR
NUMBERS GAME

8
William's age when he became Duke of Normandy

200
Norman barons held half England's land in 1086

500
castles were built by the Normans before 1100

13,418
places to be mentioned in the Domesday Book



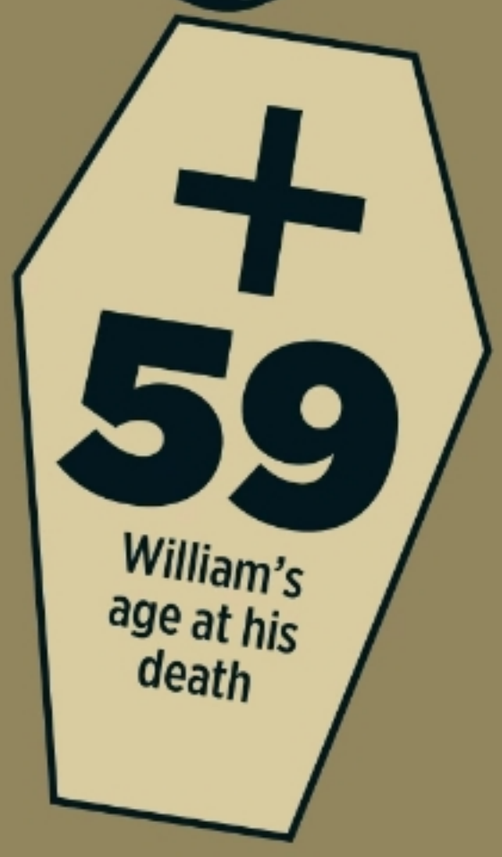
3
battles fought in England in 1066: Fulford, Stamford Bridge and Hastings

9
known children born to William and Matilda, four boys and five girls

230
the length in feet of the Bayeux Tapestry

696
ships that carried William's army across the Channel in 1066

38
William's age at the Battle of Hastings



+59
William's age at his death

fording rivers at night in case he was recognised and captured, and eventually reached the safety of his castle at Falaise.

Realising that the rebels were too strong to defeat on his own, William appealed to Henry I of France for help and in early 1047, the French king summoned his army and rode to William's aid. William scraped together as many troops as he could and together they headed west to confront the rebels. They met them at Val-ès-Dunes, south-west of Caen. The combined French and Norman army gained the upper hand and the rebels fled. William's knights pursued them relentlessly for miles. Many were mercilessly hacked down, others drowned as they frantically tried to escape across the river Orne. One chronicler wrote that so many bodies were floating in the river that its watermills came to a standstill. William then spent the next couple of years consolidating his victory and destroying the castles of his enemies. The battle was the making of William. He'd face more wars and invasions in the future but his status as duke was now secure.

WOOING MATILDA

He now had to find a wife. Clearly he needed one to supply him with an heir but a marriage had the added advantage of being a highly effective way of forging an alliance with another state. The ideal candidate was Matilda of Flanders. As a niece of the King of France and a relative of just about every royal family in Europe she was ideally placed to supply the pedigree that the Norman duke so clearly needed to attain. What's more, her father, Count Baldwin of Flanders, would be a useful ally for William at a time when he needed one, for Geoffrey Martel, the dangerous Count of Anjou, had overrun the County of Maine and was threatening Normandy's southern border. The marriage also suited Baldwin for he in turn needed an ally against his enemy, the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry III.

The only problem was that nobody had thought to ask Matilda what she thought of the arrangement. And, if the chroniclers are to be believed, she wasn't the type of woman to go meekly along with her parents' wishes. It was written that when she was told about the marriage proposal she flatly refused, saying loudly, and publicly, that she would not lower herself to marry a bastard. If this example of female defiance seems extraordinary, William's reaction to it was even more so. According to the Chronicle of Tours, he rode to Bruges where he came across Matilda as she was leaving church. Without saying a word, he dragged her off her horse by her long tresses, rolled her in the mud and gave her a sound thrashing before riding off again. You would have thought that William's brutal behaviour would have simply strengthened Matilda's resolve to have nothing to do with the loutish duke. But, apparently not. No sooner had her dismayed father begun the search for an alternative husband than she suddenly announced that she would marry no one but William since "he must be a man of great courage and high daring to have dared to come and beat me in my own father's palace". Whatever the truth is behind this extraordinary episode, the marriage was back on. There was just one problem – Pope Leo IX had banned it. The official reason for this

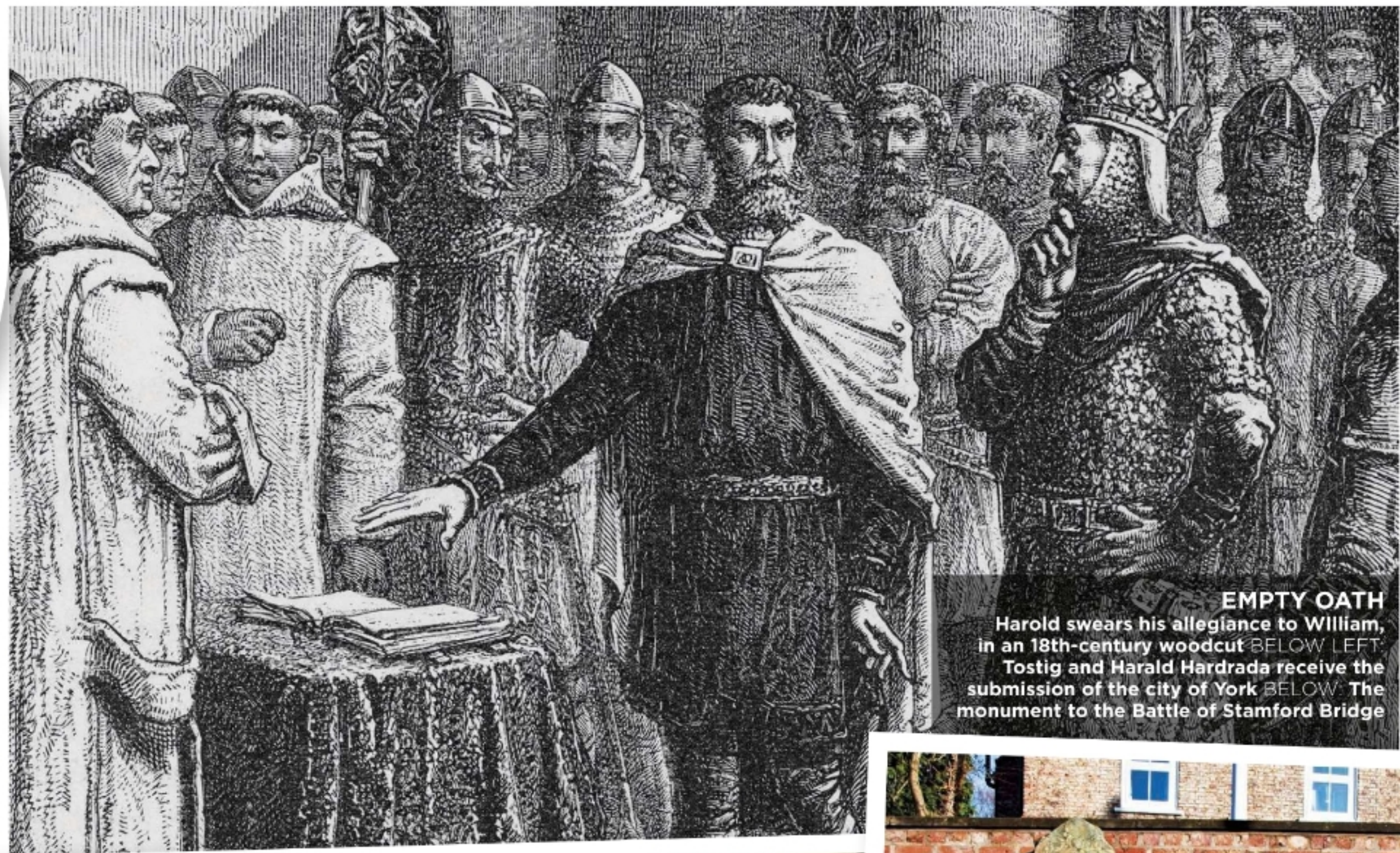
"Matilda provided the pedigree that William needed"

DID YOU KNOW?
Two of Matilda and William's children would later become the kings William II and Henry I.

POWER BEHIND THE THRONE
Matilda governed Normandy in William's absence throughout 1066

BARON HOPES
Henry I and William trounced the rebellious barons at the Battle of Val-ès-Dunes in 1047

ALAMY X1, BRITISH LIBRARY X1, GETTY X3



EMPTY OATH
Harold swears his allegiance to William, in an 18th-century woodcut BELOW LEFT: **Tostig and Harald Hardrada receive the submission of the city of York** BELOW: **The monument to the Battle of Stamford Bridge**

A BRIDGE TOO FAR
The **village of Stamford Bridge** is actually seven miles outside York, and 273 miles from Hastings. If it was nearer, who knows what 1066 would mean to us now?

FAMILY AFFAIR

Meet the Godwinsons

Harold Godwinson, William's rival for the English throne, was the second son of Earl Godwin of Wessex, a Sussex man who had risen to prominence in the service of King Cnut. Godwin was a skilled and ruthless political operator. By hook or by crook he managed to keep on the right side of both of Cnut's successors as king of England, Harold Harefoot and Harthacnut, and in 1042 he supported Edward the Confessor's accession to the throne. In 1045, the Godwinson family influence was strengthened further when Godwin's daughter Edith married King Edward.

Harold had been made Earl of East Anglia in 1043, and a few years later his lands and responsibilities were increased thanks to the scandalous activities of Swein, his elder brother. Swein's many outrages included the murder of a cousin and the abduction of an abbess, and when his misdeeds saw him forced into exile, much of his West Midlands earldom was given to Harold.

In 1051, quarrels with the Norman supporters of Edward the Confessor led to the temporary exile of the Godwinson family but they were too powerful to be sidelined for long. They soon forced their way back into court and when Earl Godwin died in 1052, his family was the wealthiest and mightiest in the kingdom. Harold became Earl of Wessex, while his brothers Tostig, Leofwine and Gyrth were Earls of Northumbria, the South East and East Anglia respectively.

When the Northumbrians rebelled against Tostig in 1065, Harold backed them and his brother was driven into exile. Tostig was later killed at Stamford Bridge, fighting alongside Harold Hardrada, Harold's Norwegian rival for the throne.

When Edward the Confessor breathed his last at the start of 1066, although others may have had a better dynastic claim to the throne, Harold's power and influence was so great that he was immediately offered the crown.

was consanguinity, ie the couple were related. But as nobody has been able to find a credible genealogical link between the pair it seems more likely that the Pope's motives had actually been political. The Pope had been appointed by Baldwin's enemy, the Emperor Henry III, and neither of them wanted to see Flanders strengthened through an alliance with Normandy.

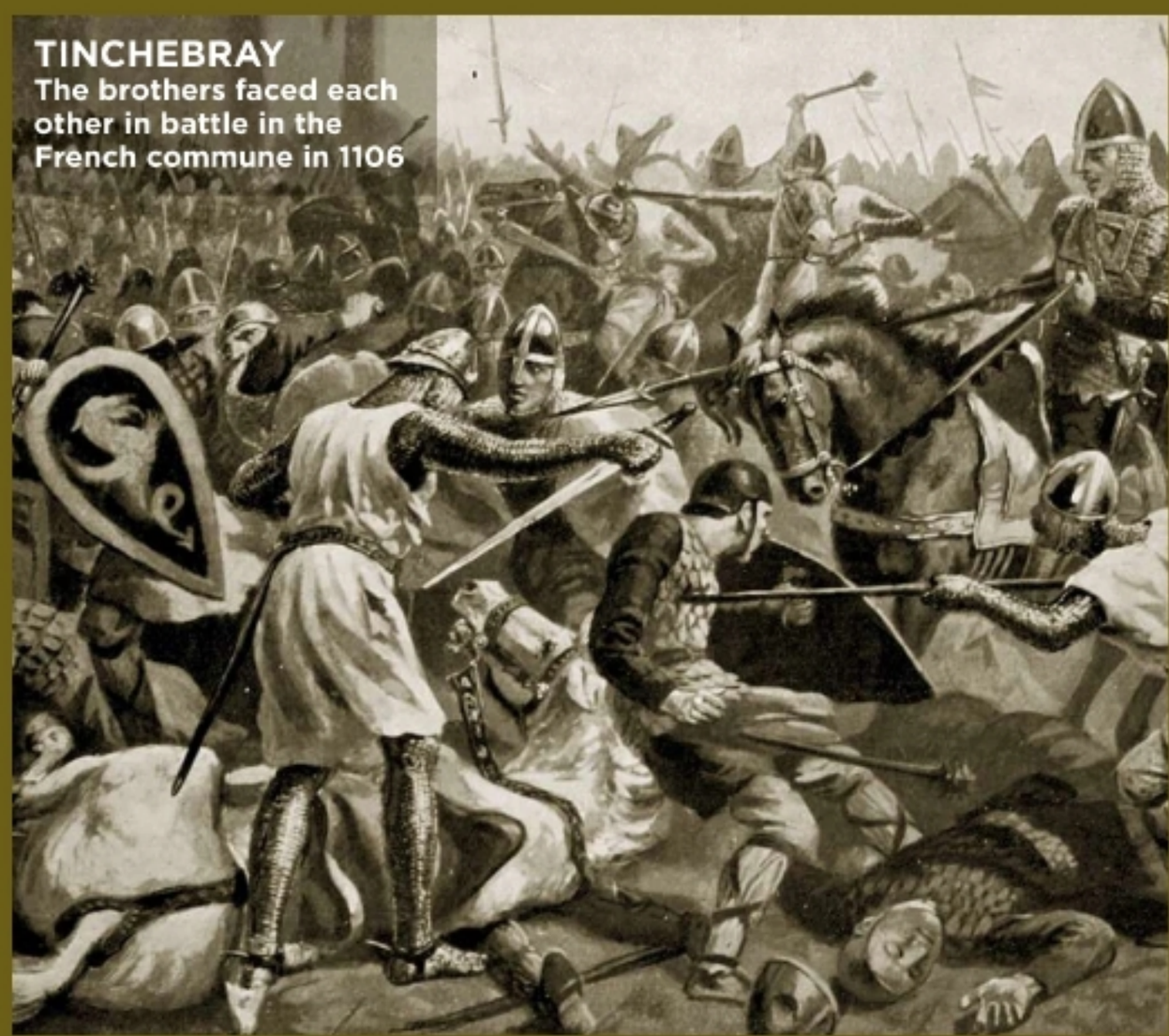
While William might have been tempted to ignore the ban and plough on with his marriage, he was, like all his contemporaries, deeply religious, and the fact that Christendom's senior cleric had forbidden the match could not be taken lightly. A number of Norman bishops were duly sent to argue William's case and Lanfrac, the prior of Le Bec and future Archbishop of Canterbury, made a personal visit to Leo in Rome. All this diplomatic activity seems to have done the trick, for the marriage eventually took place around 1051 after the happy couple agreed to each found a monastery by way of atonement.

MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

The wedding was held in the border town of Eu. Matilda was about 20, William three years older. They must have looked an odd couple; William was tall and stocky while Matilda, though not the 4ft 2ins that some historians have claimed, was decidedly petite. William's character was a complex mix of piety and brutality and the clothes he wore for the wedding reflected this; he walked down the aisle wearing a gown embroidered with crosses but with an iron helmet upon his head. It appears that their marriage was remarkably successful. Matilda bore William nine known children and there's no evidence he kept mistresses or fathered any bastards. Matilda would prove to be much more than the kind of mere adornment she could have been seen as at the time. She acted as William's regent in Normandy during the invasion of 1066 (for which her father supplied troops) and was crowned queen of England in her own right in 1068. The independent spirit of this pint-sized princess never wavered and she briefly enraged William by sending money to her favourite son, Robert, who had rebelled against his father in 1078. She died in 1083 and was buried in Caen's Abbey aux Dames, which she herself had founded.

So by 1052, William had a wife, a son (Robert) and a duchy. He also had enemies. His first challenge came in southern Normandy where the Lord of Bellême had made his castles at Domfront and Alençon available to Geoffrey Martel. Only too aware that Geoffrey could use the castles as a base

DRESSING UP
ABOVE: **Guy of Burgundy (Pope Calixtus II) led a rebellion against William in 1046**
RIGHT: **The Battle of Hastings is seen as perhaps the greatest battle on British soil, and a staple for historical re-enactment societies the country over**



TINCHEBRAY
The brothers faced each other in battle in the French commune in 1106

WILLIAM'S SONS

Boys will be boys

When William died in 1087, he was survived by three of his sons. A fourth, Richard, had been killed in a hunting accident in the New Forest. His eldest son, Robert (known as Curthose on account of his short legs), inherited Normandy, while England went to William's favourite son – the red-haired William Rufus. His third son, Henry, received no territory but was given a hefty sum of money instead, which he used to buy land in western Normandy from Robert. In 1100, William Rufus was killed in a hunting accident in the New Forest. At the time, Robert was returning from the First Crusade and his younger brother Henry took advantage of his absence to seize the crown of England. War between the two brothers inevitably followed and in 1106, Henry captured Robert at the battle of Tinchebrai. Henry gained Normandy while Robert would spend the remaining 28 years of his life as a prisoner of his brother.

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK X1

DID YOU KNOW?
One of the first casualties of the battle was William's jester or minstrel, Taillefer.

ONE IN THE EYE
That **King Harold was shot in the eye** is something every English schoolchild knows – however, this 'fact' only comes from a possible misreading of the Bayeux Tapestry, and a recorded detail perhaps added centuries after the **Battle of Hastings**.

"In 1051, Edward the Confessor went so far as to name William as successor to the English throne"

for an attack on his duchy, William hurried south and rapidly captured Alençon castle. This was bad news for its defenders, for when the young duke had arrived outside their gates they had mocked the humble origins of his mother by hanging skins from their battlements and shouting "hides for the tanner". William showed just what he thought of the joke by having the culprits brought before him and ordering their hands and feet to be lopped off. It was a calculated act of cruelty, and it had the desired effect. Shocked at what had happened, the town of Alençon quickly surrendered, Domfront soon followed suit, and nobody joked about William's origins ever again.

William was soon faced with a second, equally dangerous, foe. For years, King Henry of France had been William's staunchest supporter, but in 1052, he abandoned the duke and allied himself with William's old enemy, Geoffrey Martel. The reasons for this aren't entirely clear but whereas five years earlier a disunited Normandy had been no threat to France, times had changed. William was now a force to be reckoned with and it may well be that Henry was also deeply worried about his close links with England. Edward the Confessor, the English king, was a distant cousin of William and had spent much of his early life in exile in Normandy. Furthermore, Norman sources suggest that in 1051 Edward, who had no children, had gone for far as to name William as his successor to the throne across the sea.

In a bid to curb the power of his increasingly noisy neighbour, Henry mounted a two-pronged attack on Normandy in 1054. He led one of the invading columns himself while his brother, another Odo, rode at the head of the other. Odo's column had reached Mortemer, just 15 miles into Normandy, when it dispersed in search of plunder. Seizing their chance, the Normans attacked the disorganised French, cutting them to pieces. When Henry heard the news he hurriedly retreated back to France. Three years later he invaded again. Joined by Geoffrey Martel, he marched into Normandy, looting and burning as he went. William gathered a large army, but even though his enemies were laying waste to his duchy, he avoided battle until he was sure the time was right. Eventually the invaders reached Varaville, about ten miles north-east of Caen, where they began to ford the river Dives. Unfortunately for the French the river was tidal and before all of Henry's troops could cross, the rising tide covered the ford and split his army in two. As Henry and Geoffrey dithered over what to do next, William pounced decisively. His mail-clad knights swept down upon the rear of the divided French army, scattering it and putting it to flight. Once again Henry was forced to beat a hasty retreat. Normandy would not be invaded again until the very end of William's life.

HOME AND AWAY

In 1060, William was blessed with two major slices of luck – his two great enemies, Henry of France and Geoffrey Martel, both died. As Henry's successor was a child and Anjou was paralysed by a dispute over who should succeed Geoffrey, William no longer had any serious rivals in northern France. Two decades of sieges, skirmishes and pitched battles had turned William into a seasoned warrior and he was quick to seize the initiative. In 1063, he took over the county of Maine and two years later he mounted a successful campaign against Conan of Brittany. According to Norman sources, he was accompanied in Brittany by Harold Godwinson and it was at this time that Harold swore his infamous oath to support William's claim to the English crown. But when Edward the Confessor died a few months later and William discovered that Harold had seized the throne, he immediately began making plans for an invasion. Most of his life had been a battle: for his dukedom, for his marriage, for his reputation, even for his life. Now he faced his biggest battle of all – for the English crown.

TURN OVER FOR THE STORY OF THE NORMAN INVASION

NOT A TAPESTRY?
People will try and tell you that this embroidered cloth does not qualify as a 'tapestry' – but it does

THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST

HIDDEN TREASURE
The tapestry was never exactly 'lost', but its fame only began when it was identified, hanging in **Bayeux Cathedral** in the 18th century.

The world's most famous tapestry was probably originally commissioned by William's half-brother, Bishop Odo, and was made in England – not Bayeux – in the 1070s. It tells the story (from a largely Norman point of view) of the Battle of Hastings and the events that led up to that bloody day

DID YOU KNOW?
Charles Dickens was not impressed when he saw the tapestry, sneering, 'It certainly is the work of very feeble amateurs.'

▲ 2 SHIPWRECKED
Harold is shipwrecked on the shores of Ponthieu, north of Normandy, and captured by its Count, Guy. William of Normandy later secures his release and Harold joins him on his campaigns in Brittany.

▲ 1 ROYAL MISSION
The opening scene of the Tapestry shows an elderly Edward the Confessor sending Harold on a mission to Normandy. According to Norman sources this is to confirm a promise he'd made 15 years earlier that William should be his successor.

▲ 3 THE FATEFUL OATH
The Tapestry depicts the Norman account that before returning to England, Harold swore an oath on holy relics that he would support William as successor to Edward the Confessor as king of England.

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X2, GETTY X2, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK X4

▲ 4 SEIZING THE THRONE
Upon the death of King Edward the Confessor in January 1066, the Witenagemot, or Witan (assembly of Anglo-Saxon magnates) meets and chooses Harold to succeed him; he is quickly crowned in Westminster Abbey.

▲ 6 SCORCHED EARTH
William's army lands at Pevensey and lays waste to the surrounding area to provoke Harold into fighting before he has assembled all his forces. Harold hurries down from Yorkshire, where he has just defeated an invasion by Harald Hardrada of Norway at Stamford Bridge, to confront William.

▲ 5 CROSSING THE CHANNEL
When he learns of Harold's accession to the throne, William resolves to press his claim by force. After securing papal support for his undertaking he assembles an army of Normans, French and Bretons and sets sail for England on 27 September. His flagship, the *Mora*, carries the papal banner.

▲ 7 THE SHIELD WALL
Harold's army takes up a strong position on Senlac Ridge. Fighting on foot behind their shields they hold their ground, but are steadily worn down by the attacks of William's knights and foot soldiers, and the arrows of his archers. Harold's brothers Gyrth and Leofwine are amongst those killed.

◀ 8 DEATH OF HAROLD
Eventually the English shield wall is finally broken. Harold is cut down and the English army flees. Although it would take him another five years to secure his hold on the country, William has taken a decisive step in the conquest of England.

GET HOOKED

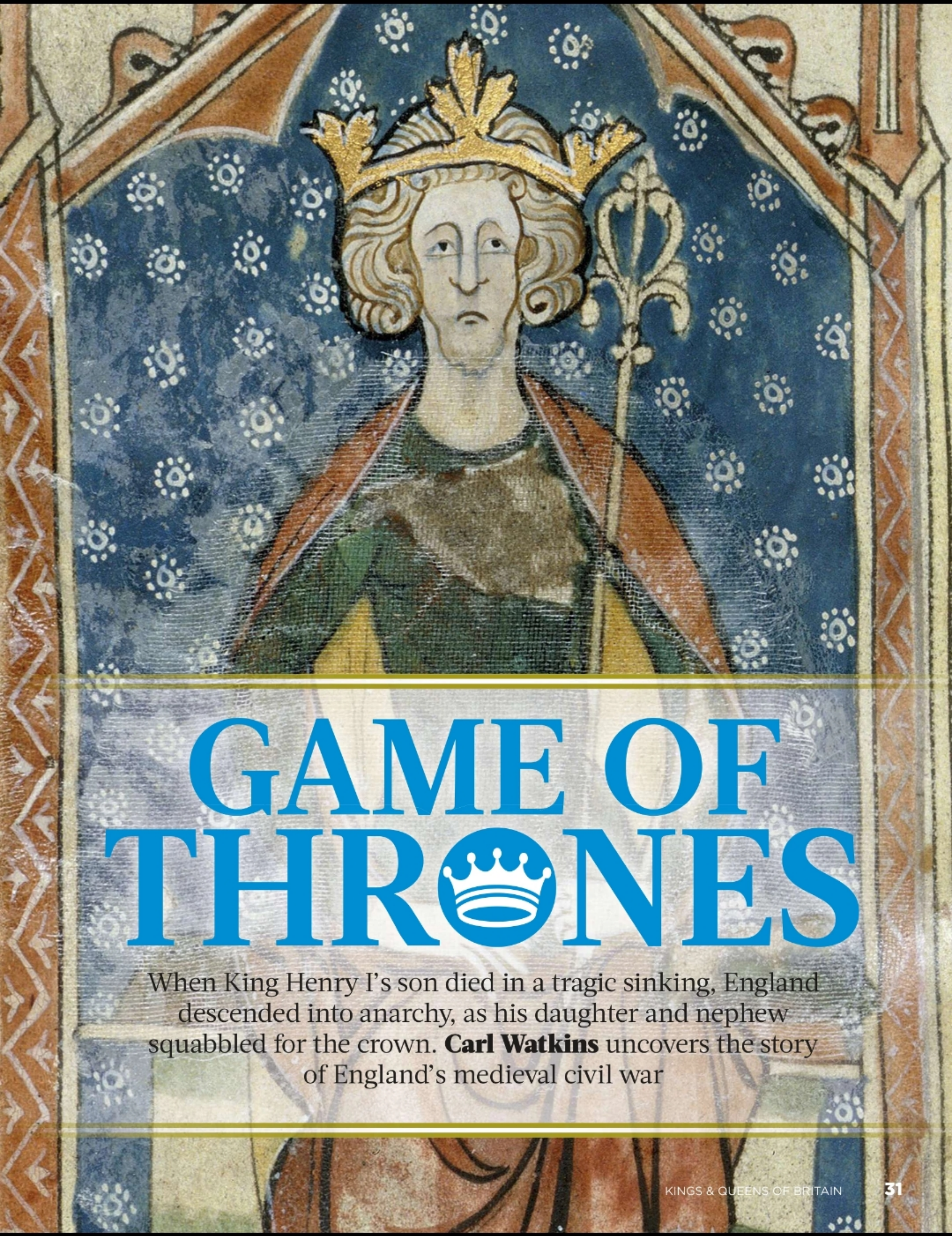
READ
Marc Morris's *The Norman Conquest* (London 2012) includes a well-written and balanced overview of William's life and conquests.

Tracy Borman's *Matilda: Queen of the Conqueror* (London, 2012) tells the story of William's wife, Matilda.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Why do you think 1066 is the ultimate red-letter date in the annals of British history?
email: editor@historyrevealed.com

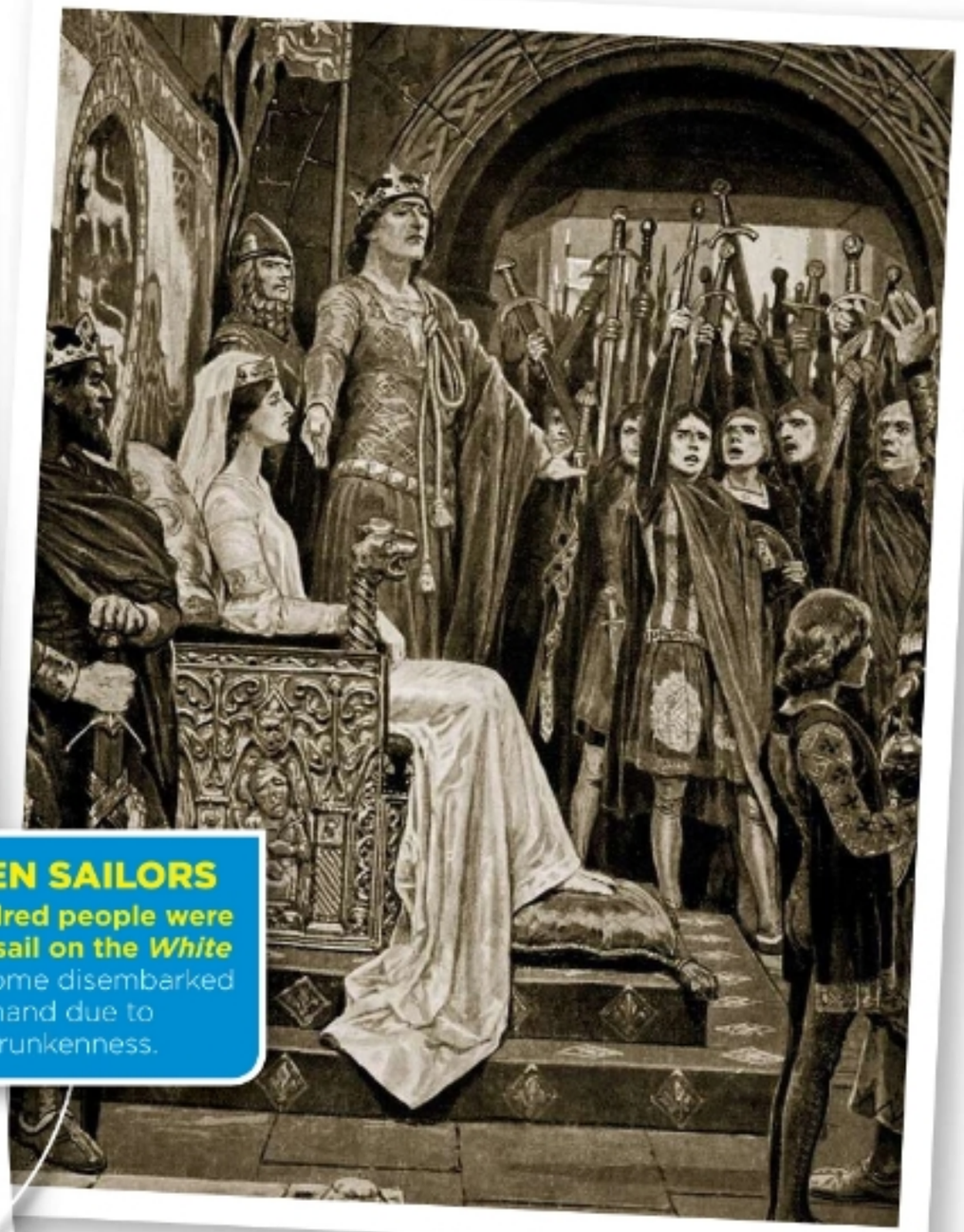
IN THE FAMILY
King Stephen (*left*) fought for his son to inherit the crown, but it passed instead to his cousin's son, Henry (*right*)

ALAMY; XI; GETTY XI



GAME OF THRONES

When King Henry I's son died in a tragic sinking, England descended into anarchy, as his daughter and nephew squabbled for the crown. **Carl Watkins** uncovers the story of England's medieval civil war



DRUNKEN SAILORS
Three hundred people were due to set sail on the *White Ship*, but some disembarked just beforehand due to excessive drunkenness.

ALL AT SEA
LEFT: **King Henry I mourns the death of his son aboard the *White Ship***
ABOVE: **Henry proclaims his daughter Matilda as his successor**

One night in the November of 1120, a ship sailed from Barfleur on the coast of Normandy carrying William Adelin, the son and heir of Henry I of England. The ship struck a submerged rock and – as panic-stricken voices cried out in the frosty air – she went down with almost all hands, Prince William among them. The sinking was a tragedy for the King, who collapsed in grief when the news was finally broken to him, but it also set in motion a political crisis. Henry had no other legitimate male offspring, and – as soon became plain – even married to a new young wife, Adeliza of Louvain, would be unable to father any more. So, in an unprecedented step, he looked to his daughter, Matilda, to be his successor.

She had married while young, to the German emperor, and had been widowed young, only to be married once again, this time less exaltedly to a handsome young count, Geoffrey of Anjou. Matilda was strong-willed and proud, never shedding the title of Empress, and though she commanded fierce loyalty from some, her second marriage spelled trouble. There was long-standing tension between Normandy and Anjou, and a worry among Norman barons that Geoffrey might rule through his wife.

"Stephen wanted to look like the strongman who could save the realm from disorder"

When Norman kings had died in 1087 and 1100, there had been a struggle within the family for the English crown, and when Henry I died the pattern repeated itself. The old King's end had come suddenly. While on campaign against rebels in Normandy in 1135, Henry fell ill and died (a result of glutting himself, it was later claimed, on eels). The timing was bad for the Empress. Having quarrelled with her father, she was far from the action, making it easier for other contenders to make a move on the throne. Among a number who could stake a claim, it was Stephen of Blois who moved fastest.

Like Matilda, he was a grandchild of William the Conqueror. Favoured by Henry I, he had risen to become one of England's greatest barons and had married well too, to Matilda of Boulogne. Luck had saved him from the wreck that claimed William Adelin. He was due to sail with the Prince, but was driven ashore by a fortuitous bout of diarrhoea just before the ship slipped anchor. Now, 15 years later, Stephen relied on judgment more than luck as he mounted a coup. Travelling first to London, he won over the citizens who acclaimed him as king, and then he rushed to Winchester, seizing a royal treasury filled by his thrifty predecessor. He showed some steel too. He hanged plunderers and put others in chains. Stephen wanted to look like the strongman who could save the realm from disorder, so it made sense for the barons to back him. And at first they did.

Matilda's cause seemed lost. But when Stephen was tested, as all new kings were, he faltered. In 1136, a rebel baron, Baldwin de Redvers, shut the castle of Exeter up against the King. After a long siege, and at the very moment that surrender seemed likely, Stephen chivalrously let the garrison go, even allowing them to keep their arms and armour. What was meant to be magnanimity looked like weakness. In the far west and the far north

ALAMY X2, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X3, GETTY X12

DESCENDANTS OF THE CONQUEROR

William the Conqueror's was a house divided. The youthful rivalries of his three surviving sons – Robert Curthose, William Rufus and Henry – turned into adult struggles over the Norman inheritance. After the Conqueror's death in 1087, Robert Curthose had fought Rufus for their father's realm, and then, when Rufus was killed in a hunting accident in the New Forest in 1100, Robert vied with his youngest brother, Henry. He was defeated and captured at the Battle of Tinchebrai in 1106, and then consigned to perpetual imprisonment, seeing out his days first at Devizes and then at Cardiff Castle, where he died shortly before his brother, in 1134.

The Conqueror's daughter, Adela, was Stephen's mother. Married to the Count of Blois, she remained very much her father's daughter, keeping memories of his glory fresh by hanging tapestries of his triumphs in her chamber. When her husband, also named Stephen, returned prematurely from the First Crusade, she felt the humiliation keenly, urging him back into battle, where he met a martyr's death. Adela then ruled Blois as a shrewd and tough-minded regent, bringing up boys who would rise in the world. Not only Stephen but also his older brother, Theobald, was in the running for the English throne in 1135. Leading barons gathered in Normandy after Henry I's death picked him out as a successor. But when Stephen's coup appeared to have come off, Theobald's supporters dropped him in favour of the man who now seemed to be their best chance to see off Matilda. Theobald's consolation was continued control of the family lands of Blois, which he ruled until his death in 1152. A third boy, Henry, followed a different path, but one that led him to the heart of England's troubled politics. He became Bishop of Winchester, and the richest man in the realm after the King.

Family tree of succession

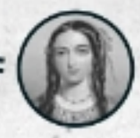
WILLIAM I *(the Conqueror)* *c1027–1087*

MATILDA OF FLANDERS *c1031–1083*

ROBERT CURTHOSE *c1051–1134*

WILLIAM II *(Rufus)* *1060–1100*

HENRY I *c1068–1135*



MATILDA OF SCOTLAND *(Edith)* *c1080–1118*

ADELA *c1067–1137*

STEPHEN, COUNT OF BLOIS *c1045–1102*

GEOFFREY OF ANJOU *(Plantagenet)* *1113–1151*

EMPRESS MATILDA *c1102–1167*

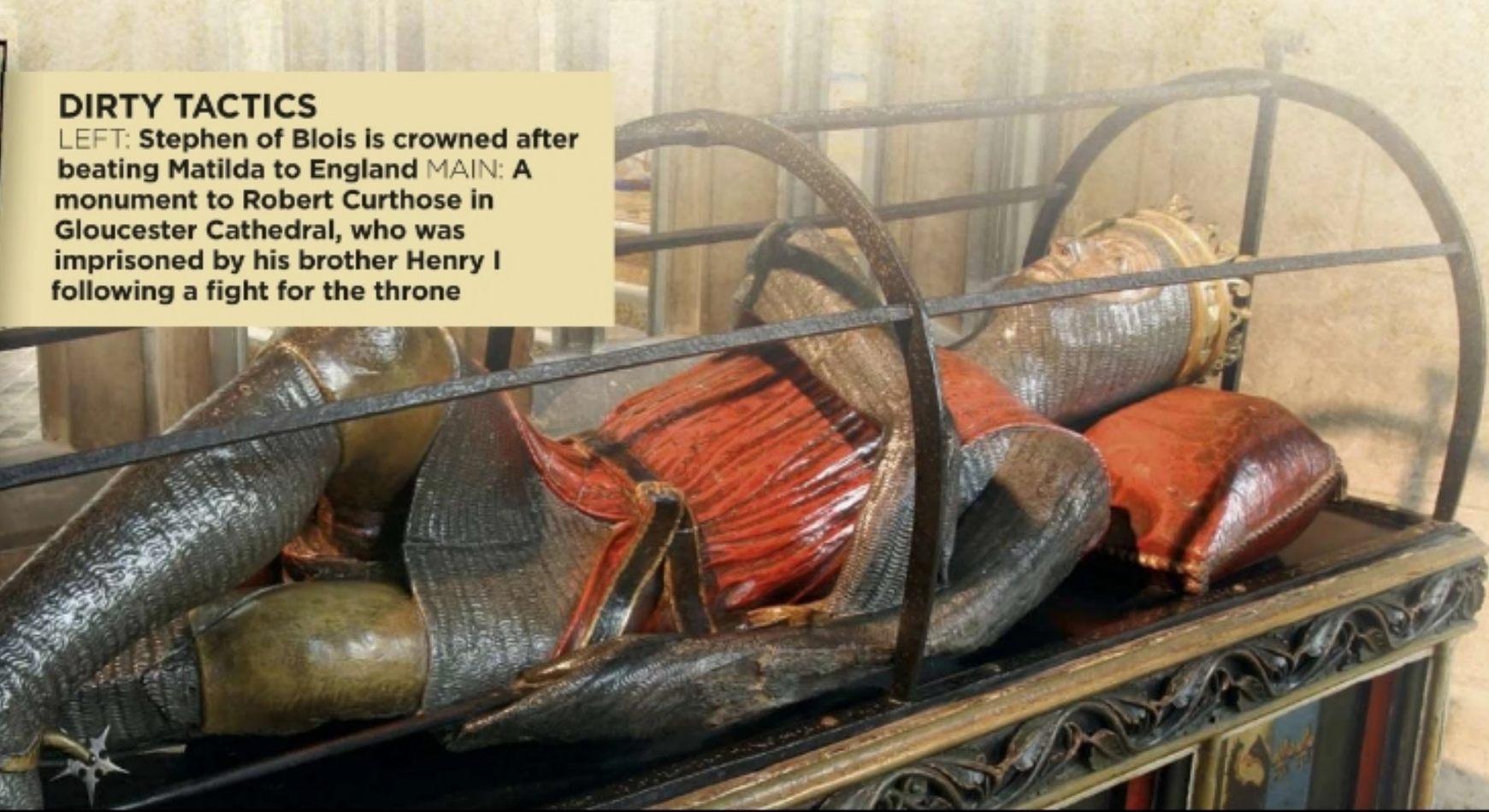
STEPHEN I *c1092–1154*

HENRY II *1133–1189*

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE *1122–1204*

RICHARD I *1157–1199*

JOHN *(Lackland)* *1166–1216*



DIRTY TACTICS
LEFT: **Stephen of Blois is crowned after beating Matilda to England** MAIN: **A monument to Robert Curthose in Gloucester Cathedral, who was imprisoned by his brother Henry I following a fight for the throne**

too, his grip slackened. On New Year's Day 1136, the Welsh defeated Norman forces in the Gower, setting in train a series of native victories that saw the Normans driven from much of southern Wales. Lurid stories circulated about these disasters, of unburied bodies scavenged by wolves, of crops and churches burned, captives sold into slavery, and a battle in which a river was bridged by corpses of men and horses.

In northern England things were no better. David I, King of Scots, was fashioning a Greater Scotland by absorbing Cumbria and Northumbria into his realm. Although his progress was slowed by defeat in the Battle of the Standard in 1138, that the defence of northern England was left in the hands of the ailing archbishop of York, Thurstan, rather than being led by the King, spoke volumes for the English people.

THROUGH HIS FINGERS

Stephen's was a kingdom slipping into crisis, with loyal subjects in the north and west being left to fend for themselves. What was wrong with England's new ruler? For all his initial dash and decisiveness, contemporaries hinted that he did not quite cut the figure of a king. He lacked the commanding voice with which his predecessor had struck fear into the hearts of men, and he treated the barons more as equals than subordinates – perhaps because he had never been destined from birth to reign over them.

Challenges proliferated, in the heartlands as well as on the edges of the kingdom. The biggest came in 1139. Empress Matilda returned, backed by Earl Robert of Gloucester, her half-brother, the bastard son of Henry I. She landed at Arundel and was entertained there by Adeliza, Henry I's widow. Again, the King fumbled a chance. Rather than laying siege to the castle, he let Matilda slip away to join Earl Robert in the West Country, where they now carved out a powerbase. The Empress drew the King's enemies to her, turning scattered rebellion into civil war and so breathing life into her claims to the throne.

In 1141, she came within an ace of victory. The King's army confronted one commanded by Earl Robert outside Lincoln, where Stephen had been attacking the castle. The eve of the battle was attended by worrying signs for the king. When he offered a candle during divine service,

SCOT FREE
In the Battle of the Standard, King David of Scotland is defeated by the Anglo-Normans

"The Empress drew the King's enemies to her, breathing life into her claims to the throne"

FALL FROM GLORY
Stephen is taken prisoner by Matilda's forces at the Battle of Lincoln, briefly interrupting his reign

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X3

AN UNWELCOME ARRIVAL
LEFT: **Londoners revolt against the new 'queen' following Stephen's capture**
BELOW: **Empress Matilda was never formally declared the Queen of England**

NOT LETTING GO
Although her first husband, the Holy Roman Emperor, died when she was just 23, **Matilda continued to use the title 'Empress'.**

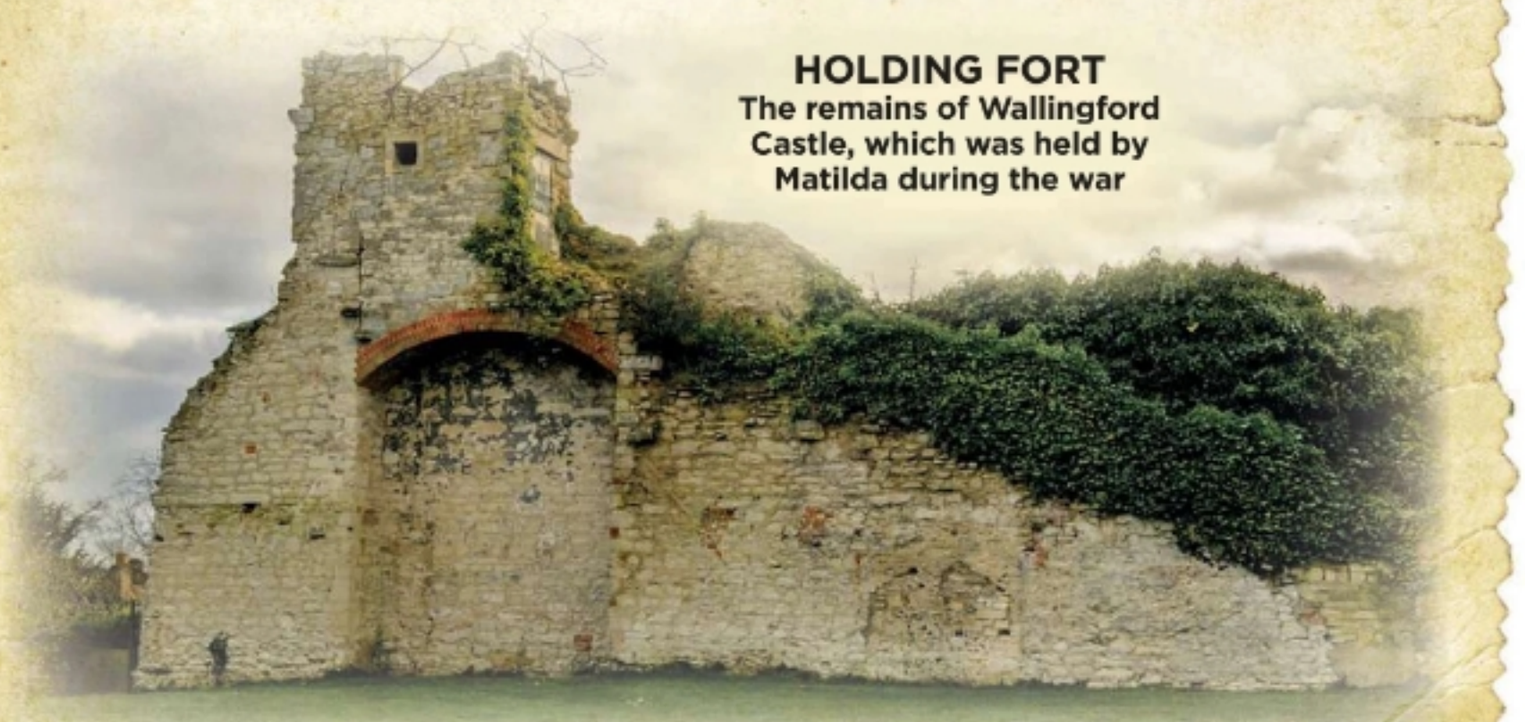
it fell and broke. The following day, his army was shattered and, in what must have seemed a fatal blow, he was taken prisoner. Styled now as Lady of England, Matilda made for London in readiness for a coronation that would turn her into England's first queen-regnant. But things did not go smoothly. She met her new subjects not in a spirit of reconciliation but rather with a hard line. There was no hint of the cheerful informality that marked Stephen's dealings with leading men. And where, wondered one contemporary, was the modest manner of the gentle sex? Instead there was a haughtiness, a face arranged into a frown, and a harsh, commanding voice. Matilda's policies matched her manner. There would be no relaxation of financial demands. The Empress would squeeze the city hard for much-needed cash.

As the Empress antagonised the Londoners, Stephen's queen applied pressure, circling the suburbs with military forces, reminding its people of the old – and alternative – regime. And so, with the Empress on the cusp of triumph, and with a banquet spread in readiness for the coronation to come, the angry citizens descended like a swarm of buzzing bees and drove her out. Worse was to come later in the year. The Empress and her allies were routed again, this time at Winchester, in a defeat so complete that many of her supporters discarded their armour as they tried to get away. The Empress escaped – ignominiously, riding male-fashion – but Earl Robert, who had commanded a fighting retreat, fell into enemy hands.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME

CASTLES AND WARFARE

Risky pitch battles between armies were not common in the Middle Ages and warfare turned more often on wasting of land and sieges of castles and towns. Stephen's England was full of castles. But because they were hard to take by storm with the siege engines of the day, the King was forced into time-consuming sieges, as at Exeter (1136) and Oxford (1142), trying to starve the defenders out. One castle in particular, Wallingford, was a thorn in Stephen's side throughout the war. He even built his own 'siege castles' around it to cut off access. But Wallingford never fell.



HOLDING FORT
The remains of Wallingford Castle, which was held by Matilda during the war

NUMBERS GAME

THE ANARCHY

9 Months during 1141 when Stephen was the prisoner of the Empress Matilda

1,115 The number of illegal castles the chronicler Robert of Torigni alleged had been built during the disorders of Stephen's reign

3 Bishops arrested by Stephen in 1139 (Roger of Salisbury, Alexander of Lincoln and Nigel of Ely), damaging his relationship with the church

1 (or maybe 2) people survived the shipwreck in which Henry I's son and heir perished

19 Winters during which Christ and his saints slept (so said the Peterborough chronicler, remembering Stephen's reign)

5 The number of children born to Stephen I and his queen, Matilda of Boulogne

2 Treaties of Durham (1136 and 1139), in which Stephen tried to settle with David, King of Scotland

LADY OF THE ENGLISH
ABOVE: **Matilda escapes the siege, camouflaged in white against the snow**
ABOVE RIGHT: **Henry, Matilda's son, inherited the throne after Stephen's death**

Robbed of her sword-arm, Matilda was forced to deal. The price of Earl Robert's freedom was the release of Stephen. So, having been ceremoniously re-crowned, the King – against all the odds – was back just nine months after his capture.

LETTING GO

Chances now came to the King, but again they were missed. The best was in 1142, when he surprised Matilda at Oxford. The royal army was not able to take the castle by storm, so settled into a siege. The King had the Empress bottled up; it should have been only a matter of time before she capitulated. But then, just before Christmas and in the dead of night, she slipped through his fingers, crossing the surrounding siege lines dressed in white, camouflaged against the snow.

In the years after Oxford, the war turned into one of attrition. The Empress and her allies could not topple the regime, but Stephen was never strong enough to drive his enemies into the sea. And as the contenders for the crown continued to vie with each other, feuds flared between barons, and townsfolk and peasants bore much of the financial and human cost

from England to the continent in the following year, her son, Henry of Anjou, took up his mother's claim. Born in 1133, Henry had known nothing but a world at war, and by the late 1140s he was old enough to begin fighting for the cause. Stephen also had sons, and the eldest, Eustace, fought at the side of a father he hoped one day to succeed.

Although the coming of these new men did not immediately transform the slog of combat, slowly the stars did begin to align for young Henry. Stephen's claim to the throne had always been shaky because his blood-right was weak. He had been the man on the spot, who had seized the levers of power and then persuaded the Archbishop of Canterbury to perform the solemn rite of coronation, which the papacy had then rubber-stamped.

"The angry citizens descended like a swarm of buzzing bees"

of the fighting. Looking back on Stephen's reign, one chronicler – writing when memories were still sharp – lamented 19 long winters in which it were as if Christ and his saints were asleep.

Generational change would not necessarily bring an end to this 'anarchy'. Although Earl Robert died in 1147 and the Empress withdrew Eustace would struggle to make his own claim stick. Stephen tried to have him crowned in his own lifetime, adopting a practice of the French kings, but neither the new Archbishop of Canterbury nor the new Pope would stand for it. Henry of Anjou, meanwhile, was in much better position, presenting himself not so much as Matilda's son but as the mighty Henry I's grandson, whose tough but peaceable rule he now promised to restore if he were made king.

Henry's appeal grew stronger in a world growing weary of war. In the late 1140s and early 1150s, some of the feuding barons began to bury their differences, sealing private treaties. The appeal of a comprehensive peace grew too – so much so that when Stephen and Henry confronted each other at Wallingford in 1153, their armies refused to fight, demanding negotiations instead. The form that the settlement now took was shaped by circumstance. Eustace – whose ambitions for the throne could have been a stumbling block – fell ill and died in 1153, perhaps already sensing that the crown was slipping from his grasp. An agreement between the warring parties followed in 1154, in which Stephen would continue to rule but, on his death, Henry would succeed him. The detail was inked out on parchment, but the deal was sealed with a kiss of reconciliation.

The two – now presented as father and adopted son – made a tour of a realm that falteringly settled into peace. For Henry of Anjou, the man who would become Henry II, there was a glittering future. For Stephen, there was only a brief Indian summer of uncontested rule. He died within the year, breathing his last on 25 October 1154. Chroniclers gave his ending only the briefest notice, as if they were already keen to forget his unhappy reign.

GET HOOKED

BOOK

Carl Watkins is senior lecturer in central medieval history at the University of Cambridge. His book, *Stephen: The Reign of Anarchy*, is available for £10.99.

GETTY X7

UP IN THE HEIR
SUCCESSION CRISES

In the Middle Ages, it was expected that the eldest son would inherit his father's crown. But successions could still be tricky. There might be no son to inherit or the heir might be a child. If the incumbent had died amidst rebellion or had been deposed, then rival claimants might muscle in. England's kings wielded huge power, so if things went wrong, ramifications were felt far and wide.

1

2

3

4

5

HAROLD GODWINSON
England's greatest nobleman swept to power when the childless Edward the Confessor died in 1066, but Duke William of Normandy claimed the old king had promised him the crown. The Battle of Hastings settled the matter, Godwinson was killed, and the Normans took over.

HENRY III
The child-king inherited a realm torn by war when his father, John, died in 1216. Rebel barons had sought help from France's Prince Louis, who now claimed the crown for himself, but loyalists won a decisive victory at Lincoln in 1217, securing Henry's throne. He ruled for over 50 years.

EDWARD II
Edward's dangerous favouritism encouraged his wife, Isabella, and her lover Roger Mortimer, to remove him in 1327, putting his adolescent son on the throne as Edward III. Dominated at first by Isabella and Mortimer, in 1330 Edward, aged 18, shook himself free and sent Mortimer to the gallows at Tyburn.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE
In 1399, Bolingbroke seized power from the tyrannous Richard II, who was forced to abdicate and died mysteriously at Pontefract in 1400. Despite his predecessor's demise, the new king, as Henry IV, struggled in the face of rebellions inspired by his shaky claim to the crown.

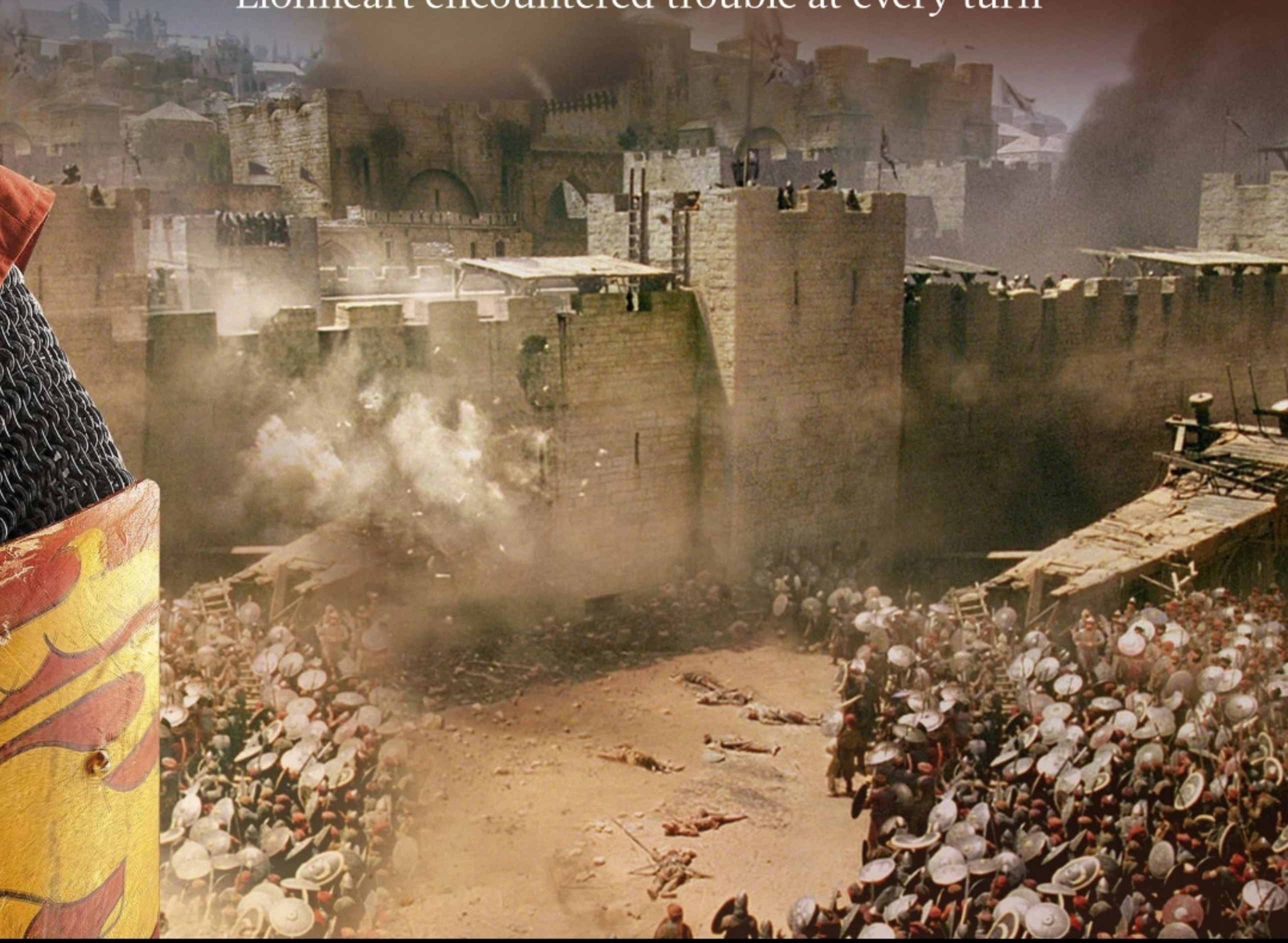
EDWARD OF YORK
Edward of York ended Henry VI's fumbling rule in 1461, becoming Edward IV. But Yorkist splits gave Henry a second chance and he was on the throne again in 1470 — briefly. Within six months Edward was back, defeating Henry's army and killing his heir at the Battle of Tewkesbury.

ARCANGEL IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1, GETTY X1

RICHARD I LIONHEART

MEDIEVAL CRUSADER KING

Shortly after becoming King of England, Richard I left these shores to join the Third Crusade to recapture Jerusalem. But, as **Julian Humphrys** explains, the Lionheart encountered trouble at every turn



"The devil is loose." It was February 1194 and Prince John of England had just heard the news he'd been dreading. For years he had taken advantage of his brother's absence on Crusade, and subsequent imprisonment in Germany, by extending his own power over England, but now he had to face the music. King Richard was coming home.

Richard had been away for more than four years, having answered a greater calling to take up the fight in the Holy Land. After Jerusalem had fallen to Saladin in 1187, a Third Crusade was preached by Pope Gregory VIII to recover the Holy City. Even before he became king, Richard had promised to join it. In December 1189, he crossed from Dover to Calais. At a meeting with Philip of France, it was confirmed they would share the spoils of war equally and that their joint crusade would depart from the great pilgrimage centre of Vézelay on 1 April the following year.

In the event, the two kings marched south from Vézelay on 4 July 1190, before going their separate ways when they reached Lyon. Richard headed for Marseille, where he had arranged to meet the huge fleet he had assembled to transport his forces to join the Christian army besieging Acre in Palestine. But the fleet was delayed after its sailors ran amok in Lisbon. After waiting for a week at Marseille, Richard ran out of patience. He hired ships to take one contingent of his army to the Holy Land while he himself sailed along the Italian coast with ten transport ships and 20 galleys to his rendezvous with Philip in Sicily.

RICHARD AND PHILIP AGREED TO SHARE THE SPOILS OF THE CRUSADE EQUALLY

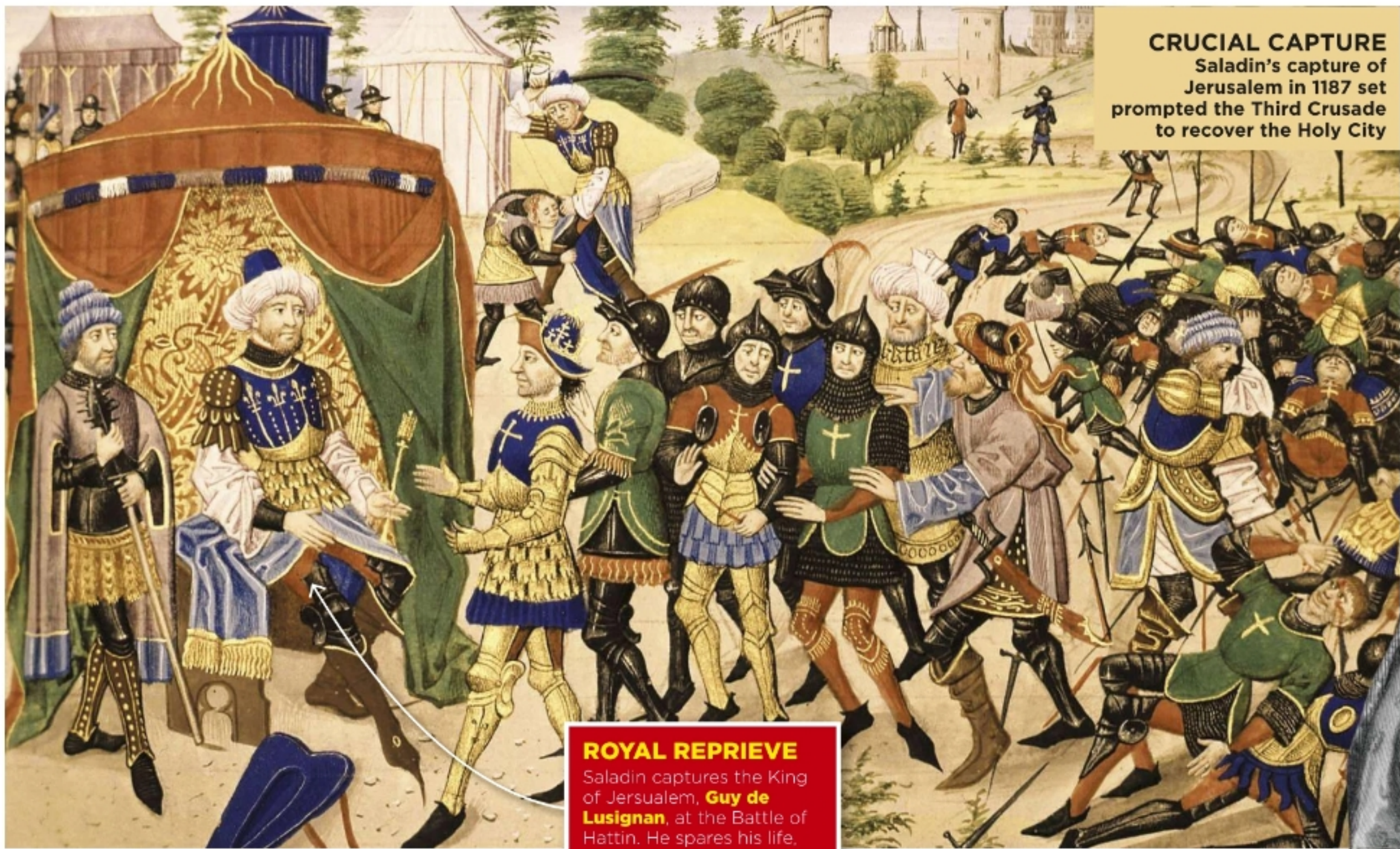
Richard had a personal interest in Sicily because its new king, Tancred, was holding the dowager queen Joanna captive; she was Richard's sister. Richard soon secured her release, but Tancred refused to hand over her dowry, as well as the treasure her late husband had left as a subsidy for the crusade. However, when Richard captured the city of Messina from him, Tancred handed over the money.

During all this, Philip had been rather sidelined and his mood wasn't helped when Richard informed him he was breaking off his engagement to the French king's sister Alix. The pair had been betrothed since childhood, but Richard was now intending to marry Princess Berengaria of Navarre instead.

STORMY WEATHER

Richard's immense fleet eventually left Messina on 10 April 1191. Within days, it ran into a storm and the ship carrying Berengaria was forced to put into Cyprus, where it was detained by Isaac Komnenos, the island's self-proclaimed emperor, who had already seized the cargoes and arrested the survivors from two wrecked crusader ships.

On 6 May, Richard arrived on the scene. When Isaac refused to return the prisoners and the plunder, Richard acted decisively. He stormed ashore, captured Limassol and, after marrying Berengaria in the chapel of St George, proceeded to conquer the entire island with the help of Guy de Lusignan, the defeated king of Jerusalem who had recently arrived from Acre. It is said that Isaac Komnenos surrendered on just one condition – that he should not be put in irons – so Richard had him bound in



CRUCIAL CAPTURE
Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in 1187 set prompted the Third Crusade to recover the Holy City

ROYAL REPRIEVE
Saladin captures the King of Jersualem, **Guy de Lusignan**, at the Battle of Hattin. He spares his life, though, explaining that "a king does not kill a king".

GETTY X4, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK X1

restraints made from silver instead. The capture of Cyprus turned out to be a huge bonus as it provided the crusaders with an invaluable supply base.

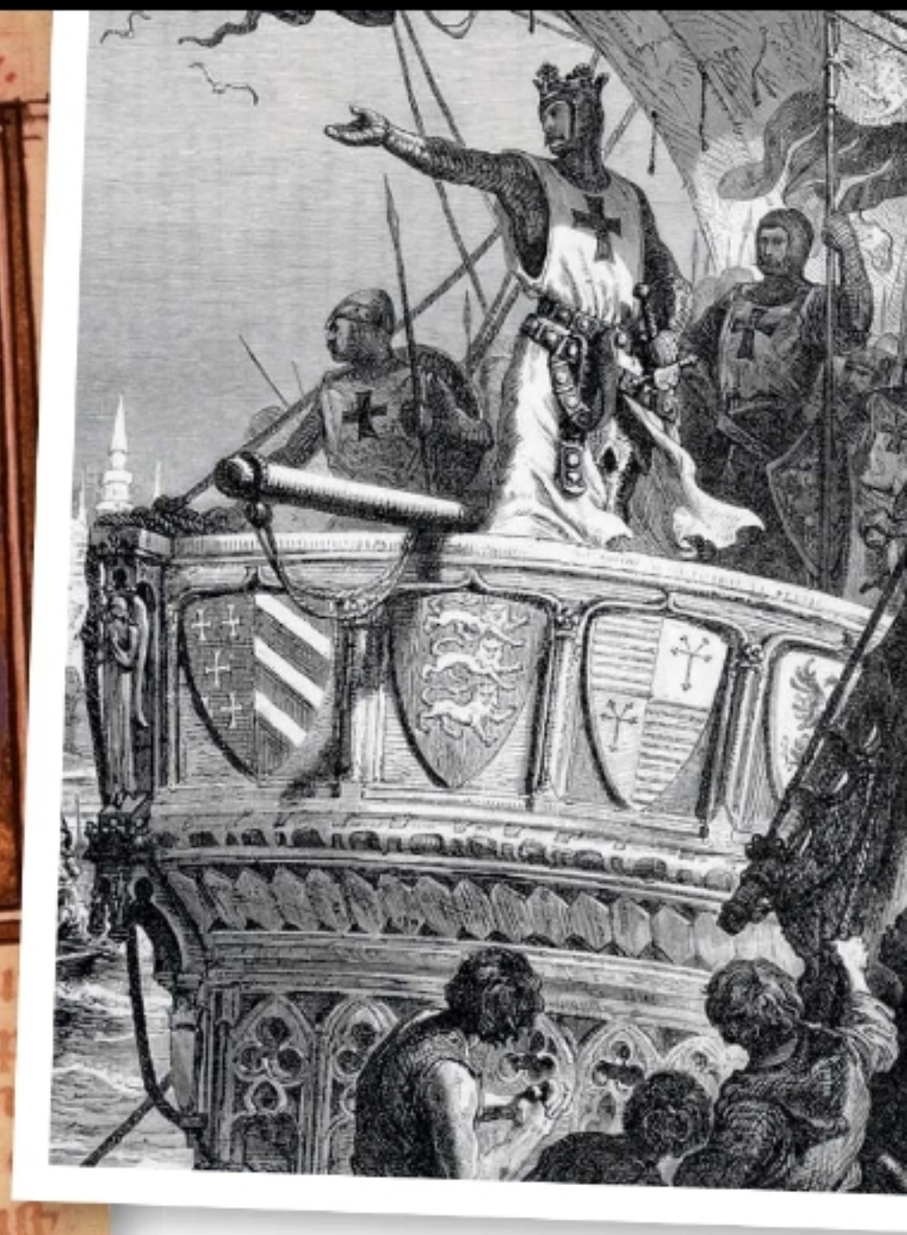
On 8 June, Richard's contingent arrived at Acre, which had been under siege for two years. The arrival of fresh troops and new siege equipment tipped the balance and, after a final attempt by Saladin was beaten back, the city surrendered to the Crusaders. Terms were agreed on 12 July: the garrison would be ransomed in return for 200,000 dinars, the release of 1,500 Christian prisoners, and the return of a piece of the True Cross from Christ's cruxifiction. All this was to be done by 20 August, but the Crusaders soon fell out amongst themselves.

THREE'S A CROWD

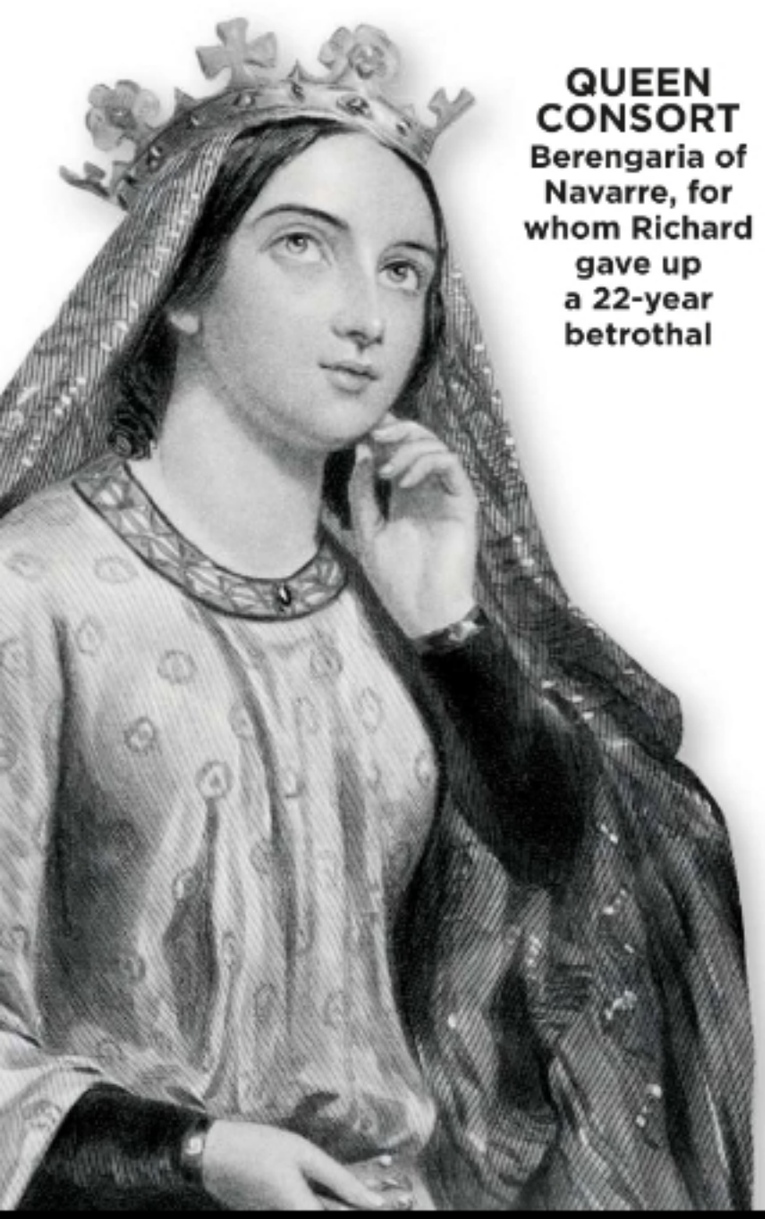
As the banners of the two kings were set up over Acre, a third banner was also raised. It was the standard of Duke Leopold of Austria, the leader of the small German contingent. The two kings had no intention of letting Leopold claim a share of the spoils, so Richard's soldiers tore it down. It was an action that would have dire consequences for Richard in the future.

The Crusaders also clashed over who should rule the Latin kingdom. While Richard initially supported the old king, Guy de Lusignan, both Philip and Leopold favoured his rival, Conrad of Montferrat. Conrad was later proclaimed king, but was assassinated before his coronation could take place. Rumours circulated that Richard may have had a hand in his murder. On 3 August, Philip – who was in ill health and unhappy about the way he had been outshone by Richard – set sail for France, putting those of his contingent who chose to remain in the Holy Land under the command of Hugues of Burgundy. Richard was probably not sorry to see him go, but he now had two enemies in Philip and Leopold – and both were back in Europe before him.

By 20 August, Richard was ready to march south towards Jerusalem. Saladin still hadn't paid the ransom for the Muslim prisoners taken at Acre and – suspecting that Saladin was trying to delay things, as well as believing that he couldn't leave 2,700 captives to be guarded and fed in Acre – Richard ordered their execution.



CRUSHING CRUSADE
ABOVE: **Acre's Muslims hand the key to the city over to Richard and Philip**
ABOVE RIGHT: **Richard sets sail from the Holy Land for Europe**



QUEEN CONSORT
Berengaria of Navarre, for whom Richard gave up a 22-year betrothal

SIBLING RIVALRY

The ultimate dysfunctional family

King Henry II spent the last 15 years of his reign saddled with four sons who switched from being allies to rivals with bewildering regularity.

In 1170, the King tried to avoid a succession crisis by crowning Henry, his eldest surviving son, as future king. But the Young King, as Henry Jr became known, was unhappy about his father's refusal to allow him any real power. In 1173, joined by Richard (by now Duke of Aquitaine), his younger brother Geoffrey and even his mother Eleanor, he rebelled against his father. The rebellion was suppressed, but 1182 saw Henry again faced with family conflict when Richard only agreed to do homage to his eldest brother if his ownership of Aquitaine was confirmed. The Young King refused and stirred up trouble by fomenting revolt in Aquitaine. Full-scale war was only avoided when the Young King unexpectedly died.

Because Richard was now heir to the throne, Henry instructed him to hand over Aquitaine to his brother John. Richard refused and soon found himself fighting both Geoffrey and John. In December 1184, Henry summoned all three brothers back to England where they were publicly reconciled. But conflict broke out almost immediately, this time between Richard and Geoffrey over a command in Normandy. Warfare was narrowly avoided, but relations between Richard and his father remained tense. Concerned that Henry planned to disinherit him in favour of John, Richard joined forces with Philip of France. In 1189, they attacked Henry, who died at Chinon on 6 July. Richard was now king.

FATHER FIGURE
Henry II saw his sons not only fight each other but also unite against his own reign

THE LIFE OF RICHARD I

NUMBERS GAME

0 DAYS
The time spent in England by Richard's wife, Berengaria.

15
Richard's age when he took part in his first military action – in a rebellion against his father.

6
The time in months Richard spent in England while he was king.

100,000
The ransom in marks paid to the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI, to secure Richard's release from captivity in 1194.

22
The time in years Richard spent betrothed to Alix, the daughter of King Louis VII of France.

2,700
The number of Muslim prisoners put to death in Acre on Richard's orders in 1191.

10,000 MARKS
The amount received by Richard from William the Lion of Scotland in exchange for releasing him from his agreement that the King of England was his feudal superior.

1
The number of children known to be fathered by Richard – an illegitimate son known as Philip of Cognac.

£15,000
The amount spent building Château Gaillard, Richard's great stronghold in Normandy. This was double what he spent on all his English castles during his entire reign.

Only the commanders of the garrison were spared.

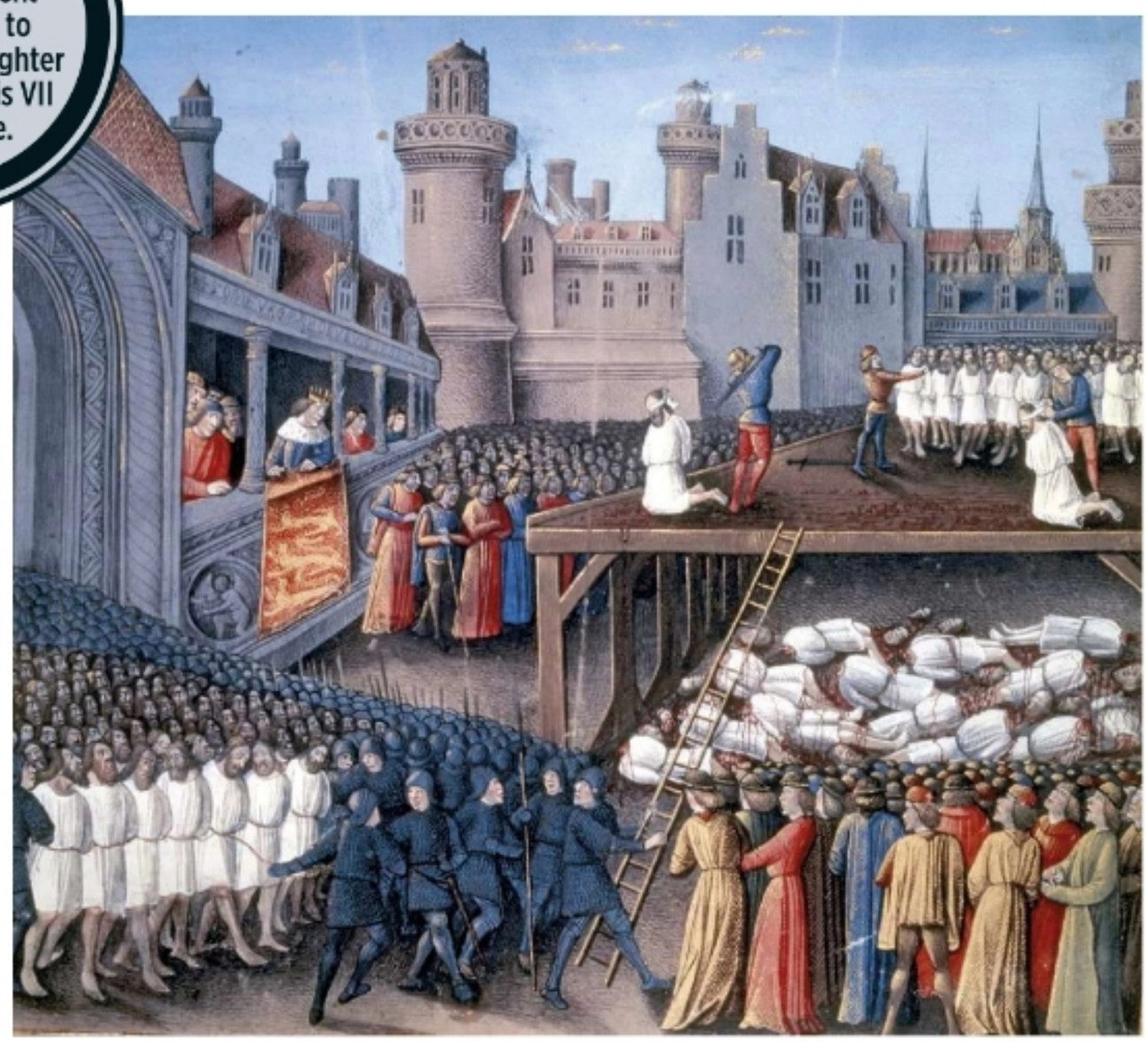
On 22 August, Richard's army left Acre and headed south. It was a tough journey in blistering heat and the Crusaders were harried all the way by Saladin's mounted archers. But Richard held his men together and, on 7 September, he defeated the Muslims at Arsuf. After taking Jaffa, Richard's army marched on Jerusalem. He got within around 12 miles of the Holy City in early January 1192 but, with his army short of supplies and ravaged by sickness, he was obliged to turn back. A later attempt on Jerusalem was also abandoned.

But, by now, Richard was receiving worrying news from home. In his absence, Philip of France was encroaching on his lands on the continent, while in England his brother John was plotting against him, garrisoning castles with his own supporters and undermining the authority of the men Richard had appointed to run the country. Realising that he needed to get back to Europe as quickly as possible, Richard negotiated a three-year truce with Saladin who was also keen to end the fighting. The Third Crusade had failed to retake Jerusalem, but it hadn't been a total failure either. It had saved the Latin Kingdom from extinction, had captured some important strongholds and secured Christian pilgrims the right to enter Jerusalem. Richard was now free to return home, but how was he to get there?

SWORN ENEMIES

Richard had fallen out with Philip of France, insulted Leopold of Austria and, by supporting Tancred of Sicily against him, alienated Henry, the Holy Roman Emperor. Returning via France wasn't an option and the Emperor controlled much of Germany, so returning by land would be a problem. On the other hand, it was now late in the year and weather conditions meant that the long

THEY WERE PERHAPS JUST 50 MILES FROM SAFETY WHEN THEIR COVER WAS BLOWN



PUBLIC EXECUTION
Before he and his troops headed towards Jerusalem, Richard ordered the deaths of 2,700 Muslim prisoners that they'd captured at Acre

LIONHEART: THE MANE MAN

A reluctant Englishman?

Richard has often been described as a man with no interest in England. Although born in Oxford, he spoke little English, spent just six months of his entire reign in the country and is reputed to have said that he would have sold London if he could have found a buyer. But to criticise him for his absence is to miss the point. Richard wasn't just King of England. As heir to the vast empire of his father, Henry II, he was also Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, areas that needed defending against the incursions of his great rival, Philip of France. Following his release from captivity in 1194, Richard spent just two months in England before leaving its government in the capable hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury and sailing to Normandy. He never returned.

His move to France was just in time – in his absence, Philip had already conquered large amounts of Richard's territory and been given others by his rebellious brother Prince John.

Over the next five years, Richard would pour his energies into the war against Philip, organising alliances and steadily winning back lands the French king had taken from him. When the two armies met at Freteval on the Loire in July 1194, Philip fled so hurriedly that he left behind his entire baggage train, including his treasure and archives.

Four years later, Philip was on the run again, this time during Richard's campaign to recapture the Vexin, a county north of the Seine between Normandy and the Île de France. At the battle of Gisors, so many French knights were struggling to escape across a bridge that it collapsed. Philip was pulled to safety but 120 of his knights were drowned.

ETERNAL WARRIOR
Outside the House of Lords, Richard I is commemorated by this grand statue of him in full battle mode

route back to England by sea wasn't an option either. In the end, it was decided to travel through eastern Germany to Moravia, where a group of princes, led by Richard's brother-in-law Henry the Lion, were opposed to the Holy Roman Emperor. The only problem was it involved travelling through the territory of his old enemy, Leopold of Austria.

In October 1192, Richard left the Holy Land for Corfu, where he hired galleys and headed north into the Adriatic with a handful of trusted companions. The weather was stormy and they ultimately landed, or were shipwrecked, in December on the northern Adriatic coast at Aquileia, near Trieste in north-eastern Italy, from where they headed for Moravia disguised as pilgrims.

They had reached the outskirts of Vienna, perhaps just 50 miles from safety, when their cover was blown. Some suggest it was the luxury provisions his companions kept buying him that revealed his identity; others say it was that they kept calling him 'sire'. Another account suggests he was given away by one of his party being spotted with a pair of the king's monogrammed gloves stuck in his belt. Whatever the reason, the tavern in which Richard was staying was soon surrounded by a hostile crowd and the King, abandoning his disguise, was forced to surrender to Duke Leopold.

Leopold locked Richard up in Dürnstein Castle on the Danube and

RICHARD'S HQ

Castle in the sky

In 1196, Richard began the greatest and most expensive building project of his reign when he ordered the construction of a mighty castle on a rock above the Seine. Château Gaillard was built to protect Normandy from Philip II and to act as a base from which Richard could launch his campaign to recapture the Vexin. Constructed in just two years at the staggering cost of at least £15,000, the castle represented the latest in military technology. Built around a powerful keep, its concentric design allowed an attacker to be shot at from a number of walls at the same time. It was also one of the first Western castles to have machicolations – projecting stone galleries that enabled missiles to be dropped onto attackers' heads. Despite its formidable defences, though, it fell to the French after a long siege in 1204, opening the way for their total conquest of Normandy.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME...
Château Gaillard was believed to be impregnable – until the French captured it six years after its construction was completed

AKG X1, GETTY X2

BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Death of a King

Richard took a devil-may-care attitude to danger... and finally paid the price. In March 1199, he was campaigning in the Limousin region of central France where he was suppressing a rebellion by his vassal, the Viscount of Limoges. After laying waste to the recalcitrant viscount's lands, he moved on to lay siege to the little castle of Chalus-Chabral. Accounts vary as to why he did this. Some claimed that Richard wanted to get his hands on a hoard of Roman treasure that had recently been dug up by a peasant and was being stored there, but it seems more likely that the capture of the castle was simply a military necessity.

On the evening of 26 March, without bothering to put on his body armour, Richard went out to inspect the progress of his sappers, who were trying to undermine the castle wall. Suddenly he was hit by a crossbow bolt at the junction of his neck and shoulder. Hiding the pain, Richard rode back to his quarters and gritted his teeth as a surgeon dug around in his shoulder in an attempt to remove the bolt.

The following day, a patched-up Richard continued to direct siege operations, but on the morning of 28 March, the putrid smell coming from the wound left him in no doubt that his fate was sealed – gangrene had set in. He sent for his mother and waited for the inevitable. Richard was still alive when the castle fell and the crossbowman who had shot the fatal bolt was brought before him. Ever one to admire a feat of arms, Richard forgave the man and ordered him to be released unharmed. Shortly after, Richard died in his mother's arms. The crossbowman was flayed alive.

FATAL BLOW
Not wearing his body armour, Richard is felled by a crossbow bolt

AKG X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X5

RICHARD DEFENDED HIMSELF SO ELOQUENTLY AND CONFIDENTLY THAT THE CHARGES WERE DROPPED

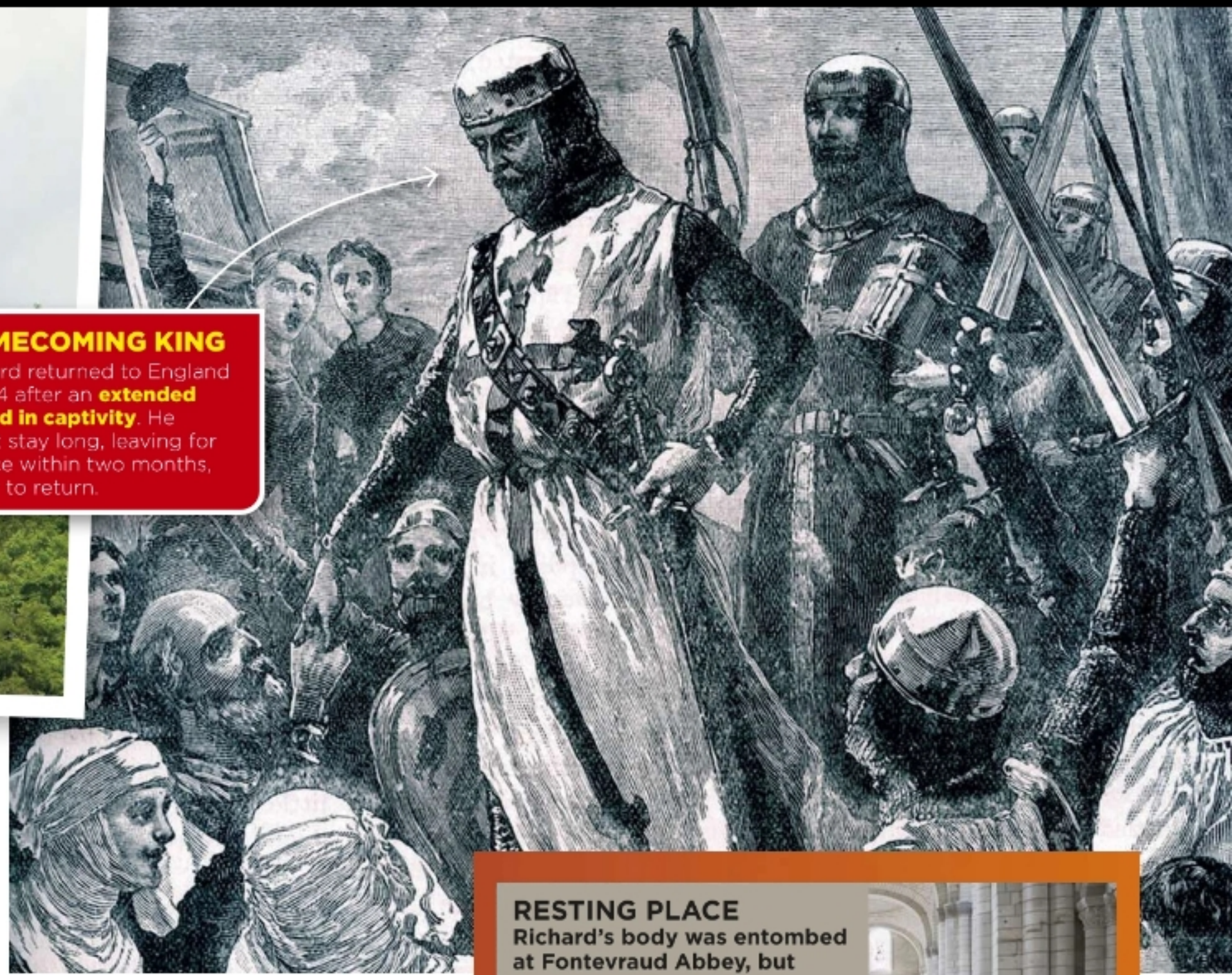
informed his overlord, the Holy Roman Emperor, about his piece of good fortune. Henry, in his turn, gloatingly informed Philip of France about what had happened. Pope Celestine III was less impressed, as a papal decree had ordered that crusading knights were not to be molested on their journey to and from the Holy Land. He excommunicated both Duke Leopold and Emperor Henry for seizing Richard, but they clearly thought this was a small price to pay for getting hold of their enemy.

For more than a year, Leopold and Henry haggled over who should own Richard. Eventually Leopold accepted the promise of 20,000 marks from any eventual ransom and, on 14 February 1193, he handed Richard over to Henry. In March, at his Easter Court at Speier, Henry charged Richard with a long list of crimes, including betraying the Holy Land and plotting the murder of Conrad of Montferrat. But Richard defended himself so eloquently and confidently that even his enemies were impressed and the charges were dropped. It was here however that Richard agreed to pay a ransom of 100,000 marks for his release.

TIME TO NEGOTIATE

Richard was moved from fortress to fortress in the lands controlled by Henry and Leopold. In mid-March, he was at Ochsenfurt and it was here that two English emissaries, the Abbots of Robertsbridge and Boxley, made contact with him, the point at which negotiations for his ransom began. There is, alas, no evidence to support the oft-repeated story that Richard's place of imprisonment was found by his friend, the troubadour Blondel, who went from castle to castle playing his lute outside the walls until he heard a familiar voice singing along to the tune he was playing. In reality, of course, Henry and Leopold had nothing to gain from hiding Richard's whereabouts if they wanted to negotiate his release and receive the ransom.

DID YOU KNOW?
Richard was so appreciative of his chef that he knighted him, making him Lord of the Fief of the Kitchen of the Counts of Poitou



HOMECOMING KING
Richard returned to England in 1194 after an **extended period in captivity**. He didn't stay long, leaving for France within two months, never to return.

KINGLY CAPTURE
LEFT: **Because he had made so many enemies in Europe, Richard's return from the Holy Land was perilous and he ended up imprisoned and held to ransom by Duke Leopold at Dürnstein Castle in Austria.** ABOVE: **The ruins of the castle today**

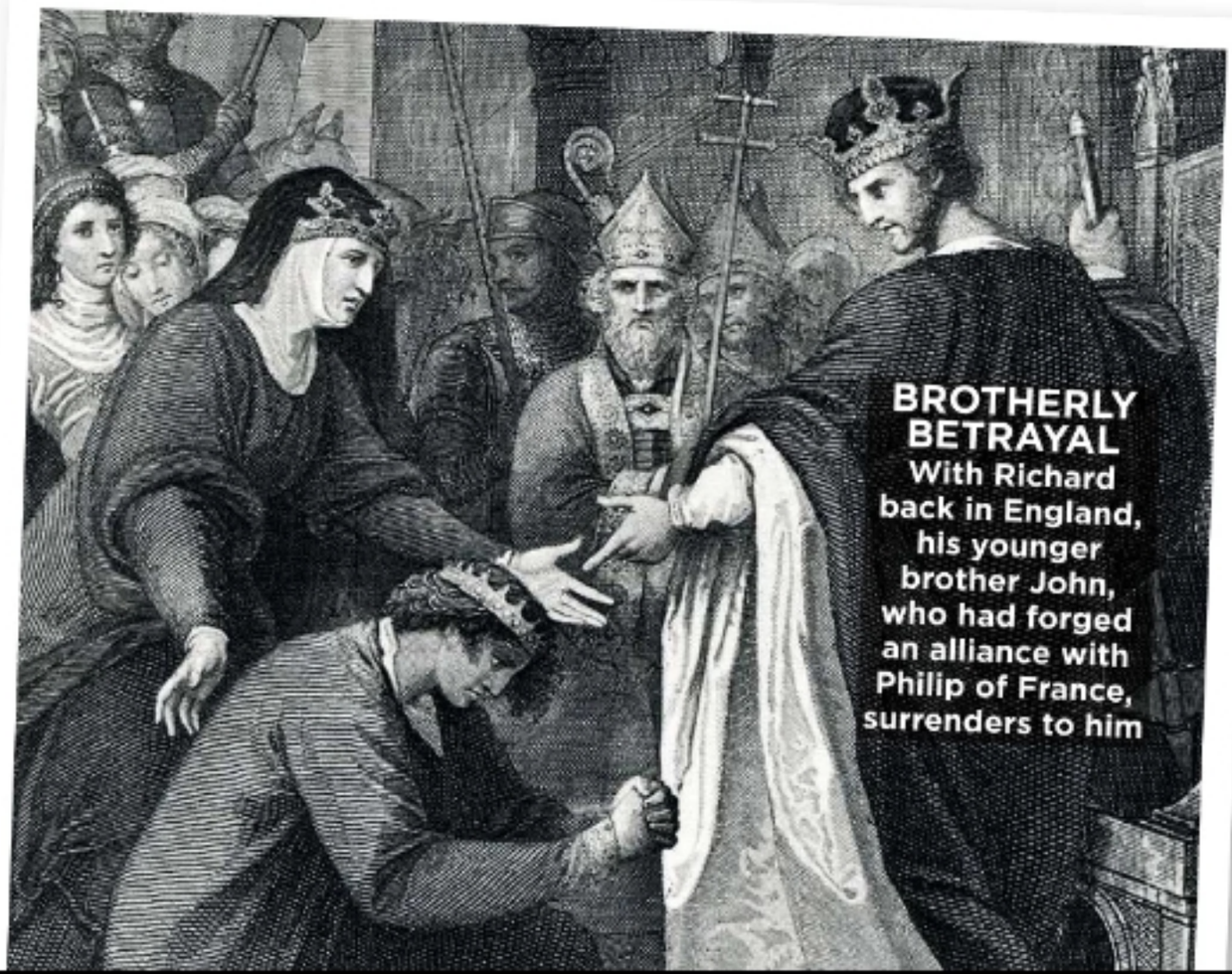
Negotiations for Richard's release took the best part of a year and it took an enormous effort to raise the ransom in a country already impoverished by funding Richard's Crusade. One hundred thousand marks was an enormous sum; it has been subsequently calculated as perhaps twice the gross domestic product of the whole of England at the time. Eventually the money was raised and, in early February 1194, it was handed over to Henry.

On 13 March, Richard landed at Sandwich in Kent and then, after visiting the shrines of Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds, moved on to Nottingham. It was here where the last of John's garrisons were still holding out and, after some fierce fighting, Richard's soldiers forced a surrender. On 17 April, he wore his crown in state at Winchester. Less than a month later, after forgiving his brother for his misdemeanours, he sailed to Normandy, never to return to England again.

GET HOOKED

READ
The Crusades: the War for the Holy Land by Thomas Asbridge (Simon & Schuster, 2010)

VISIT
Château Gaillard, the castle that Richard built above the River Seine and the village of Les Andelys in Normandy



BROTHERLY BETRAYAL
With Richard back in England, his younger brother John, who had forged an alliance with Philip of France, surrenders to him

RESTING PLACE
Richard's body was entombed at Fontevraud Abbey, but was later removed during the French Revolution

BEYOND DEATH
Royal remains

Richard's body was divided up after his death – common practice among the aristocracy at the time. His entrails were removed and buried at Chalus, his heart was embalmed and sent for burial at Notre Dame in Rouen, and his body was buried beside that of his father Henry II in Fontevraud Abbey. Remorseful over his role in his father's death, Richard had asked to be buried at his feet. England received nothing at all.

Richard's once brightly painted effigy remains in Fontevraud, but his body has gone, a victim of the suppression of the abbey during the French Revolution. His heart was rediscovered in 1838 during excavations at Rouen. It had long since turned to dust but recent forensic examinations have revealed that it was once embalmed with mercury, spices, sweet-smelling plants and frankincense. While this was necessary to ensure that the heart arrived in Rouen in reasonable condition, it has been suggested that the choice of frankincense may well have been inspired by biblical texts and used to give the heart an odour of sanctity.

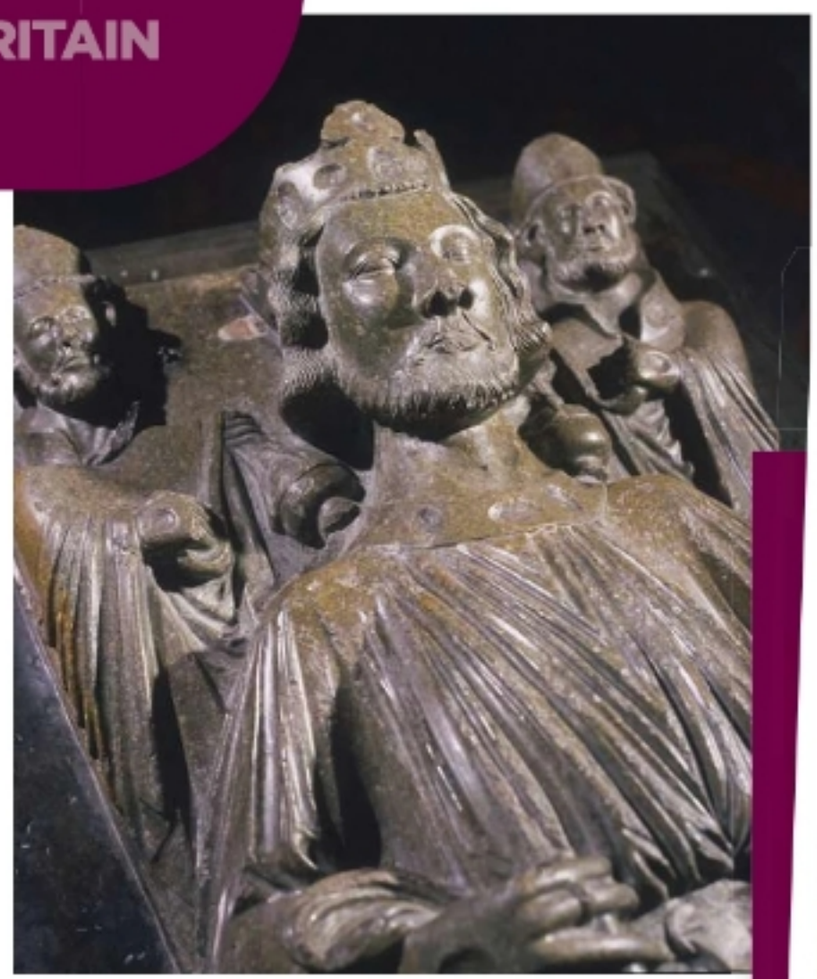
BAD KING JOHN

More than eight centuries since the birth of Magna Carta, one of history's most important documents, the King who granted his royal seal to the great charter remains maligned and despised, as **Jonny Wilkes** explores

THE MAGNA CARTA KING
King John didn't actually sign Magna Carta, as illustrated here, but granted his royal seal to it

THE MANY FACES OF BAD KING JOHN

Today, King John's archetypal image is of a snarling, scheming and spineless medieval tyrant, constantly outwitted by the dashing hero Robin Hood. Yes, it's a fictitious and over-simplified portrayal, but his real-life exploits don't help his case. He was a ruthless taxman and a cruel womaniser who made enemies of his own people and plunged his country into civil war. There is no denying John has one of the worst reputations of any English king or queen – which is really saying something, considering the competition. This is despite being the King who granted his seal, albeit reluctantly, to the charter that redefined English law, Magna Carta. But how have the passing centuries affected his legend? Has history been unkind to the 'Bad King'?



HONOURABLE BURIAL

Knowing that he was close to death in October 1216, John dictated that he wished to be buried in Worcester – a town that had recently been recaptured by his royalist forces. As his will also protected his son Henry III's succession, his body was treated with respect when he died. It was carried to Worcester Cathedral and laid to rest in front of the altar. In 1232, a new sarcophagus was built, featuring an effigy of John laying in dignified repose, sword in hand.

TYRANNICAL REX

Several medieval chroniclers, most of them monks, wrote highly unsympathetic histories of John's reign. They were likely influenced by John's rift with the papacy and decade-long quarrel with the Church. One of the most vitriolic of his critics was Matthew Paris, writing in the years after John's death. In his chronicles, he asserts, "Foul as it is, Hell itself is made fouler by the presence of John".

There is a meadow on the outskirts of London, sat on the bank of the River Thames in Surrey. It doesn't look like much, certainly not a spot heavy with symbolic meaning, but that field, Runnymede, is where one of the founding documents of human liberty was created and agreed on.

The document we now refer to as Magna Carta ('the Great Charter') was granted the royal seal of King John on 15 June 1215. It went some way to protecting people's rights and, crucially, it limited the powers of the Crown by putting the reigning monarch under the law. Make no mistake about it, a charter that revolutionary could only have been drawn up if there was a king who inspired great enmity among his people, and John was that King. He ruled as a tyrant, lost English territories in multiple embarrassing campaigns and squeezed every penny from his barons. And only months after Magna Carta was sealed, he turned his back on the agreement, even though he knew this would mean civil war.

John has one of the worst legacies of any English royal – not due to his fabled exploits against Robin Hood, but his pomposity, cruelty and fatal lapses in judgement. Yet, does 'Bad King John' deserve the dubious honour of being called England's worst monarch?

FAMILY FEUD

Born in 1166, childhood was far from harmonious for John, the youngest son of King Henry II and his smart, powerful wife Eleanor of Aquitaine. With four older brothers, it was unlikely he would ever become King or inherit substantial land from his father's empire, which is how he picked up the nickname 'Lackland'. All that changed, however, when he was six. His brothers Henry, Geoffrey and Richard plotted with Louis VII of France to seize the throne from their own father. Henry II made swift work of crushing the rebellion and, even though his brothers were dealt with leniently, John leapfrogged his siblings to become the King's favourite son.

John was presented with lands and titles, as well as a betrothal to the wealthy Isabella of Gloucester, so that before he was a teenager, he had been given the estates of the Earl of Cornwall and the lordship of Ireland. He visited the latter in 1185 – but the trip caused a political brouhaha when the inexperienced, tactless John insulted the Irish chieftains by pulling on their long beards.

And when Richard (the Lionheart) became King in 1189, John couldn't resist the temptation of being so close to the throne. Although John's three-year-old nephew Arthur (the son of the late Geoffrey) was named heir over him, the covetous Prince saw his chance when Richard was captured in 1193, on return from the Crusades. John attempted to overthrow Richard's chancellor and crown himself King, only for the plot to fail. On Richard's return, John was punished with the loss of his lands.

By the time of Richard's death in 1199, however, John had wormed his way back into favour and gathered support among many of the English nobility. His position was strong enough that – despite Arthur's rival claim, backed by

WINSTON CHURCHILL, BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

"When the long tally is added, it will be seen that the British nation and the English-speaking world owe far more to the vices of John than to the labours of virtuous sovereigns."

MARY EVANS X1, GETTY X4

ACCORDING TO THE BARD

In Tudor times, religious and political upheaval led to a more positive outlook on John's legacy, with historians praising his resistance to papal pressure. In a time of strong monarchs, John was seen as a bastion of the divine right of kings and queens. William Shakespeare wrote a play about him, depicting him as a fiercely patriotic, if treacherous, monarch.

VICTORIAN VILLAIN

The descent of John's reputation into villainy was complete by the 19th century – when Victorian writers and historians increasingly saw the medieval period as a time of chivalry and honour. It was with novels such as *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle and Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* that the Robin Hood myth became forevermore entangled with John's legacy.

the French King Philip II – John was crowned at Westminster. It was a risky move, but John was able to placate Philip with a fragile peace, which seemed to secure his territories in France and gain recognition of his claim to the throne.

CROWN GAINED, LANDS LOST

There was some cause for optimism. John was a cultured, literate leader who had extensive knowledge of his lands and took an active interest in the country's financial and judicial administration. He was also the first King since 1066 who spoke English, as well as French.

Yet, in typical manner, John's relentless, belligerent behaviour made sure the peace didn't last long. In 1199, John abandoned his wife Isabella of Gloucester in order that he could marry the young girl Isabella of Angouleme instead, ignoring the fact that she was already betrothed to someone else. Matters were made worse when an appeal was made by Isabella's intended husband to Philip II, who summoned the English King to the French court to answer for his actions, only for John to refuse. Philip declared war, and John was forced into a costly, logistical nightmare of a conflict to defend his territories in France.

He failed. Philip's forces well and truly hammered John's armies. Moreover, his terrible treatment of prisoners and his rumoured murder of his nephew Arthur caused outrage among his enemies and allies alike, many of whom deserted him or switched sides. By 1206, John had lost Normandy, Anjou and parts of Poitou and he retreated to England, humiliated and with the duchy of Aquitaine as his only remaining territory in France.

> **"Foul as it is, Hell itself is made fouler by the presence of John"**
>
> *13th-century chronicler Matthew Paris*

Nothing meant more to John than his reconquering of these lost lands, but to launch a campaign meant raising a lot of money for his war chests. The intransigent John set about the task with ruthless efficiency, overhauling the financial system to make his nobles to pay up. And if they couldn't, punishments were severe, as their land and property could be forfeited to the Crown. One such financial measure was the levying of scutage payments, paid in lieu of military service, which he demanded 11 times in his years as King – the same total as the three Kings before him combined. As well as extensive taxes, John filled his coffers by charging for the appointment of sheriffs, steep fining of crimes in the royal forests, and the selling of charters for new towns.

As well as funding a war, John was also facing religious upheaval. When the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hubert Walter, died in 1205, John refused Pope Innocent III's nomination for his replacement, a brilliant thinker named Stephen Langton. The furore saw the Pope issue an interdict, prohibiting nearly all religious services, and excommunicating John in 1209. The matter was only resolved in 1213 – by which time John's thoughts were dominated by his imminent campaign – thanks to extreme measures. Langton was appointed and John took the extraordinary step of surrendering the entire Kingdom of England to the papacy, in return for papal support and an annual stipend (rather ironically, £666 a year).

ROAD TO RUNNYMEDE

John's meticulously planned campaign back to France began in early 1214, with high hopes of regaining an English foothold on the continent. But before the year was out, John was back in England with his tail between his legs, having achieved next to nothing, and with a six-year truce agreed. Part of the failure was down to discontent among the barons – they had refused to provide men-at-arms, angered as they

JOHN v ROBIN HOOD

Hollywood has been enraptured by Robin Hood, with countless versions of his legend being made throughout the 20th century – and all depicting John as the pantomime bad guy. In the 1938 swashbuckling hit *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, Claude Rains plays the deceitful Prince John who seizes the throne from his brother and hunts down Errol Flynn's Robin. The film stands as one of the most iconic tellings of the Robin Hood story.

COWARDLY LION

Arguably the most enduring cinematic depiction of John comes from Disney's 1973 animation *Robin Hood*. Voiced by Peter Ustinov, John is a cowardly, childish, greedy, thumb-sucking lion with a snake as an adviser.

TIME TO RETHINK?

Several modern historians have attempted to balance out the history of John's reign, focussing on his adept and determined efforts in the administration of the country. Rather than leaving the hard work to others, John took a personal role in his finances and the organisation of the judicial system. Yet there is a general consensus that John was let down by his erratic and petty behaviour, and his propensity towards cruelty.

were by excessive taxes and John's inconsistent and arbitrary treatment towards them.

Relations continued to sour until May 1215 when several barons, led by Robert Fitzwalter, renounced their fealty to John and civil war broke out. What was unusual was that the barons weren't looking to replace John – they had no rival claimant in mind – but rather seek redress on wrongs done to them. In years to come, this gave the plight of the barons a romantic twist, making them out to be in search of liberty against the evil machinations of a despotic villain. On 17 May, the barons captured London, making it impossible for John to avoid the negotiating table.

On 10 June, the barons met with John halfway between the rebel stronghold at Staines and John's base at Windsor Castle – at Runnymede – to discuss the terms laid out in the Articles of the Barons. Archbishop Langton was the chief mediator in the negotiations, which lasted ten days before both sides accepted the details of the final document, which would later become known as Magna Carta. It was the first formal document to limit the power of the monarch, and state that they are as much under the law as their people, while upholding the rights of free people – although in 13th-century England, this was a small minority.

As a peace treaty, Magna Carta failed miserably. It may be treated with utmost reverence today, but, in truth, the first document lasted only ten weeks before civil war erupted again. Neither the barons nor John intended to abide by it, while Pope Innocent III annulled the document entirely, describing it in a letter as "not only shameful and demeaning but also illegal and unjust". He went on to declare the charter, "null and void of all validity for ever".

BARON WASTELAND

Magna Carta was finished before it even got going, and England was at war. John dealt with rebel forces with the same ruthlessness and violence by which he ruled, as the northern counties and Scottish borders were laid to waste, leaving rebellious barons in dire need of support. They, therefore, requested the help of Prince Louis of France, who agreed to send a force to invade England. With these French allies, the barons regained control of the South East and North, leaving John no option but retreat west and regroup.

That autumn, John attempted a counter-offensive, but everything was going against him. It is said, although it is difficult to confirm whether this actually happened, that his baggage train went missing trying to cross the Wash, in East Anglia. This included the loss of the Crown Jewels. Then, John contracted dysentery (although there have been rumours that he was poisoned by the venom of a toad). On 15 October, he wrote to the Pope saying he was, "detained by a serious and incurable illness". Three days later, after being carried in great pain to Newark Castle, John died, seemingly leaving his dynasty in tatters.

Just before his death, however, John got something crucially right – he dictated a will. It is the earliest surviving royal will in history, and it secured the succession of John's nine-year-old son, Henry III, under the guardianship of the brave and much-respected knight William Marshal. Under his leadership, the civil war was brought to an end in 1217 with the defeat of the rebel barons, and Magna Carta was reissued several times – ensuring its place in history.

As for John, his reputation is destined to fester at the very dregs of English royal history. Maybe that's where he belongs. Not just because he was cruel, tyrannical and treated his subjects with downright contempt – there have been numerous examples of similar English monarchs since him – but because without a King so loathed as John, there would never have been Magna Carta. When that document came to stand for so much good, carrying as it does the mantle of human liberty, it needed an adversary, a necessary evil, a villain.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What were the good points about 'Bad' King John's reign?

Email: editor@historyrevealed.com

MOVIE STILLS X2, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, ETON COLLEGE ARCHIVES X1, GETTY X1

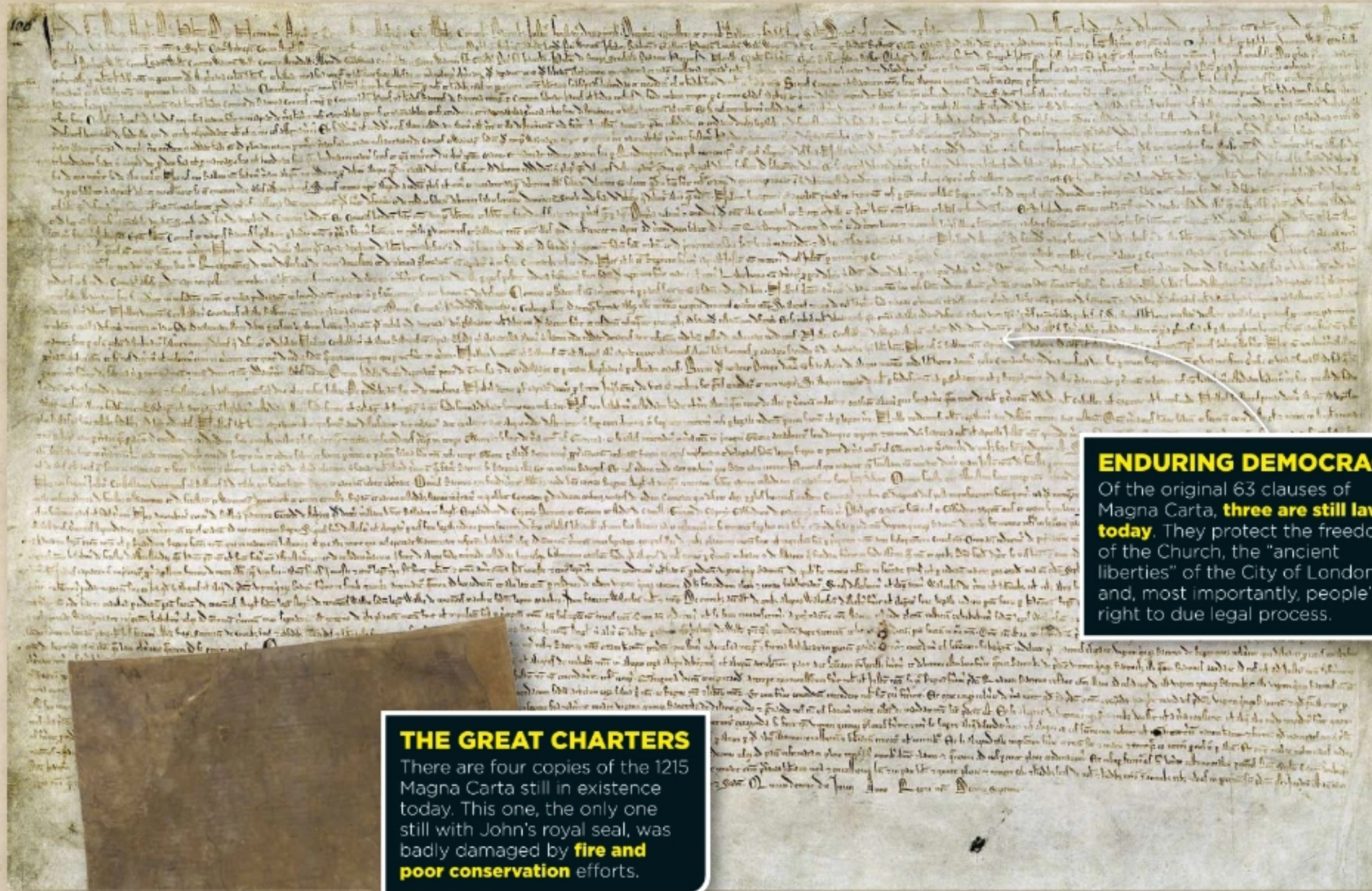
MAGNA CARTA

How 'the Great Charter' changed from being a failed peace treaty to one of the earliest documents establishing England's fledgling democracy

The 1215 agreement between John and his barons wasn't the first time an English King promised good government, safeguarded the rights of their subjects and put limits on their own power. When Henry I was crowned in 1100, after being elected King by the barons, he issued his Coronation Charter, including the assertion, "I abolish all the evil customs by which the kingdom of England has been unjustly oppressed."

But what Magna Carta did was establish the principle that no one, not even the King or Queen, was above the law, and guarantees the rights of the individual to justice and a fair trial. The most famous line of Magna Carta – and one of the three clauses still on the statute books today – reads: "No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land." It is important to note that this only applied to 'free' subjects in England, which accounted for a minority as most were unfree serfs.

Its primary goal in 1215, however, was as a peace treaty between John and a band of rebellious barons, and to that end, it failed. Yet, if anything, the abruptness of the charter's practical use only served to enhance its symbolic meaning through the years. Eventually, it became something that the original document never intended to be: a foundation stone of human rights.



ENDURING DEMOCRACY
Of the original 63 clauses of Magna Carta, **three are still law today**. They protect the freedom of the Church, the "ancient liberties" of the City of London and, most importantly, people's right to due legal process.

THE GREAT CHARTERS
There are four copies of the 1215 Magna Carta still in existence today. This one, the only one still with John's royal seal, was badly damaged by **fire and poor conservation** efforts.

A CLAUSE TOO FAR

In the 1215 Magna Carta, a specific clause was particularly controversial, and may have been a key factor in getting the document annulled by the Pope – who feared that a dangerous precedent could be set. Clause 61 established a council of 25 barons to implement the charter and ensure that John was adhering to it.

What's more, the council were to be given extensive powers to seize royal lands and property if they believed the monarch had acted beyond the law. As the 1215 Magna Carta only lasted ten weeks, the council never formed and, in later versions of Magna Carta, clause 61 was removed.

FAMILIES AT WAR
Knights in armour and men-at-arms fought for power in a conflict that eventually saw the last of the Plantagenet kings, Richard III (left) and the first of the Tudors, Henry VII (right)

ALAMY X3, GETTY X2, PEN AND SWORD BOOKS X1

THE WARS OF THE ROSES

WHAT'S THE STORY?

York versus Lancaster, white rose versus red, Plantagenet versus Tudor – the Wars of the Roses continue to fascinate us. Seen as one of the bloodiest episodes in English history, they've inspired not only the pen of Shakespeare but also the typewriters and word processors of an army of historical novelists. It was a period that saw the deaths of kings, the extinction of royal dynasties and the brutal slaughter of much of England's nobility, but the Wars were much more than a simple fight to the death between two royal houses. **Julian Humphrys** looks at who fought, what happened and details some of the ambition, heroism, loyalty, treachery, greed and pure self-interest that lay behind this dramatic period of conflict.

RED V WHITE
Shakespeare popularised the idea that the two Houses picked their roses in the 15th century, but there's little historical basis for the event

1

WHAT WERE THE WARS OF THE ROSES?

On close inspection, this complex era reveals itself to be a time of duplicity, rivalry and cut-throat ambition

ROSE OF LANCASTER
The red flower now used as an emblem of Lancashire was only adopted by the Lancastrians at the very **end of the Wars**.

Although they're popularly seen as a dynastic struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster, the Wars of the Roses were actually three wars, largely fought between the descendants of King Edward III (reigned 1327-77), each with its own causes and ramifications.

FIRST BLOOD

The initial conflict was caused by the inadequacies and poor mental health of the Lancastrian Henry VI of England, and the ambitions of Richard of York, great-grandson of Edward III, a leading English magnate who demanded a top role in government. This tense situation was exacerbated by rivalries among the country's aristocratic families.

In May 1455, York and the noble Neville family attacked the royal court at St Albans, killing a number of leading Lancastrian nobles. Conflict broke out again in 1459 and, the following July, York captured the King at the Battle of Northampton and then later claimed the throne for himself.

Eventually, a compromise was agreed, which allowed Henry VI to remain King, but with York installed as his heir. However, Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, refused to accept the disinheritance of her son, Edward, Prince of Wales, and raised an army to fight for the Lancastrian cause. York was defeated and killed at the Battle of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, in December. But the crushing victory won by York's son, Edward IV, at Towton in March 1461, effectively settled the issue in favour of the Yorkists, although occasional fighting would continue in the North East for a further three years.

WAR REIGNITES

The second war was primarily caused by the discontent of the mighty nobleman Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. Warwick 'the Kingmaker', as he's often known, had been a supporter of Edward IV but, following the King's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, Warwick saw his influence slip away. In 1469, he rebelled, briefly taking Edward prisoner. The following year, Warwick made an extraordinary alliance of convenience with his former foe, Margaret of Anjou, forcing Edward IV into exile and temporarily restoring Henry VI to the throne.

In 1471, the exiled Edward returned to England and brought his enemies to battle separately,

defeating and killing Warwick at Barnet, now in Greater London, and beating Margaret at Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, where her son was killed. Edward then had Henry VI quietly done away with and ruled unchallenged as Edward IV until his early death in 1483. He was succeeded by his 12-year-old son, Edward V.

MEN OF AMBITION

The last phase of fighting was triggered by Richard III's seizure of the throne in 1483, and the disappearance of his nephews, Edward V and Richard – better known as the Princes in the Tower. These actions fatally split the old Yorkist establishment and enabled Henry Tudor – a largely unknown exile – to mount a challenge for the throne.

In 1483, many of Edward IV's former servants rebelled against Richard III. The rising was stamped out, but dissatisfaction was rife. Richard had alienated many by favouring men in his own Northern power bloc. Further grants of confiscated rebel land and property to his supporters only added to his unpopularity. As a result, although few nobles were prepared to openly support Henry Tudor in his bid, few supported Richard, either.

On 22 August 1485, Richard was killed at the Battle of Bosworth, and Henry seized the throne.

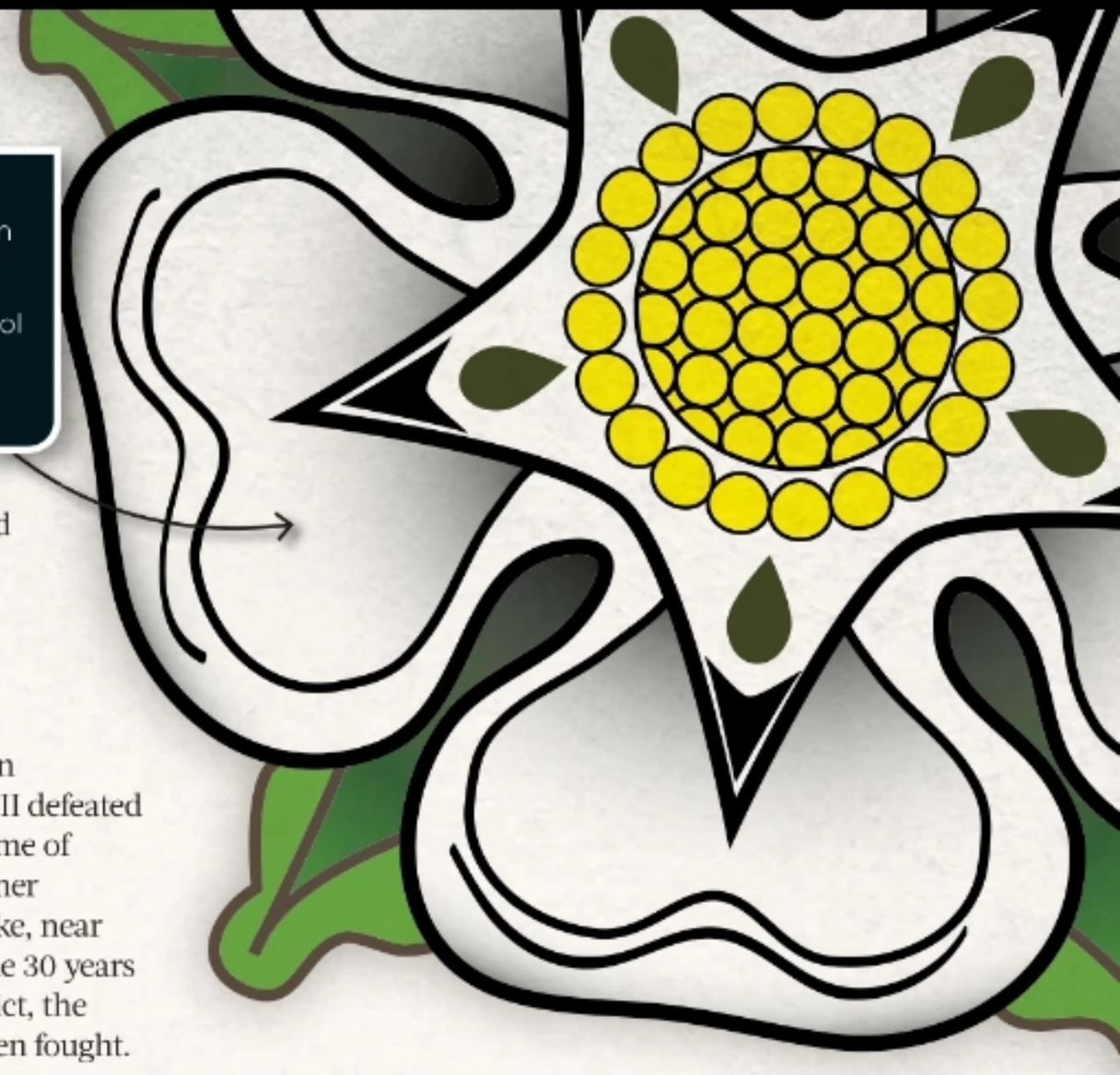
Two years later, on 16 June, Henry VII defeated a rebellion by some of Richard III's former supporters at Stoke, near Newark. After some 30 years of intermittent conflict, the final battle had at last been fought.

9

The age, in months, of Henry VI in 1422, when his father died and he became King of England

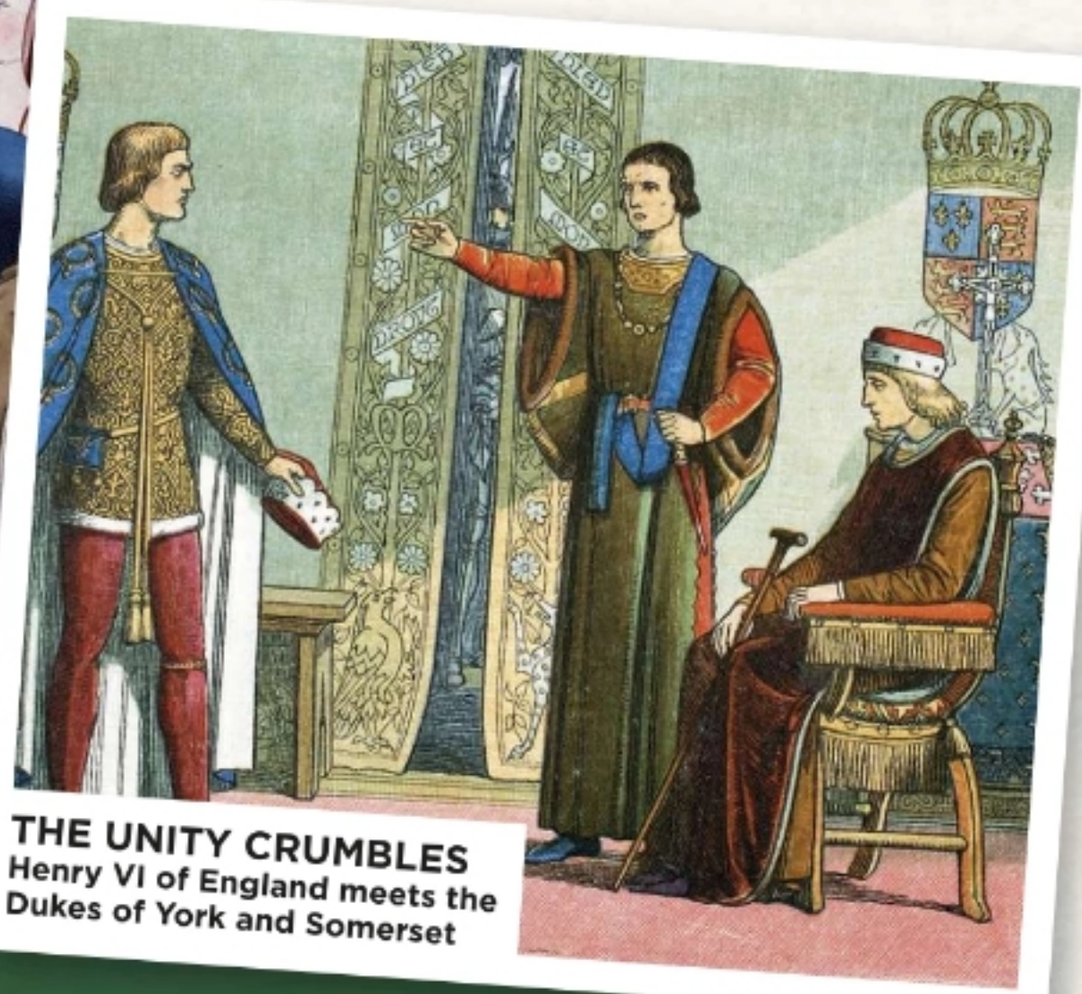
ROSE OF YORK

Today, the white rose can be seen all over the city of York, but in the 15th century, it was the symbol of the House of York, which was based in the **South and Midlands**.



"IN 1483, DISSATISFACTION WAS RIFE. RICHARD III HAD ALIENATED MANY..."

MIGHTY MATRIARCH
Margaret of Anjou, Queen to Henry VI, and her ladies



THE UNITY CRUMBLES
Henry VI of England meets the Dukes of York and Somerset

THE GREAT DIVIDE

WERE THEY CIVIL WARS?

While the first war had a regional flavour, with Lancastrian forces coming largely from the North and the Yorkists from the South and Midlands, these were not wars between rival regions and certainly not between the cities of York and Lancaster. A noble's title often did not equate to the area in which he held land. Indeed, it's worth noting that, for much of the period, the city of York supported the House of Lancaster.

Initially neither Richard of York nor Richard of Gloucester seem to have intended to seize the throne. York sought to secure his position as Protector of the Realm during Henry VI's insanity and defeat his rival for power (and the man he blamed for the loss of Normandy to the French), the Duke of Somerset. Eventually he realised that the enmity of the Queen meant he could never be secure while Henry VI was on the throne and he made a bid to replace him. Similarly, in great contrast to Shakespeare's portrayal of him as a long-term schemer, Richard III seems to have been a totally loyal servant of his brother, Edward IV, while he was alive. Richard's main concern, after his sibling's death, was to wrest the new King Edward V and his brother from the control of his enemies, the Woodvilles. His decision to depose the boy came later.

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X1

HOUSE OF YORK

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

ROYAL HOUSE OF TUDOR

SWITCHED SIDES

2

POWER STRUGGLE

The Wars of the Roses were, perhaps, the ultimate family drama...

The leaders of both factions worshipped the same God, spoke the same language and believed in the same system of government.

The participants fought for power not principles: securing their positions at court, advancing the interests of their families, protecting their inheritances and settling old scores were their primary aims.

If any principle was involved, it was whether to stay loyal to an anointed king. A few families, like the Lancastrian de Veres, remained true to one side throughout, but most defected according to circumstances.

Faction leaders were often related to their enemies and, at a time of rapidly changing fortunes and alliances, it was by no means unknown for the children of rival families to marry each other. In 1472, for example, Anne Neville was married off to Richard of Gloucester (the future Richard III), one of the men who had helped defeat and kill her father a year earlier.

It was a dangerous time to be a nobleman – battles were often followed by executions of the defeated leaders. By the time of the Battle of Bosworth (1485), peers of the realm had become so wary of action that most stayed at home.

9
The number of leading members of the powerful Percy family to die violent deaths in the 15th century

1

Henry VI (1421-71)

Henry was nine months old when he succeeded his father Henry V. His adult years were punctuated by periods of insanity. He was overthrown by the Yorkists in 1461, reinstated in 1470, but then murdered in the Tower of London after the Lancastrian defeat at Tewkesbury.

WELL SCHOOLED
Henry VI had a **lasting legacy** in the sphere of **education**, founding Eton College and King's College, Cambridge as well as co-founding All Souls College, Oxford.

2

Margaret of Anjou
(1430-82)
The French wife of Henry VI, she ruled in his place during his insanity. A determined woman, she tried to exclude Richard of York from government and fought vigorously to secure the succession of her son, Edward, until his death at Tewkesbury in 1471.

4

Richard, Duke of York
(1411-60)
Richard was a descendant, through both his parents, of Edward III. He was the leading opponent of royal policy in the 1450s and claimed the throne himself in 1460. He was killed at the Battle of Wakefield that December.

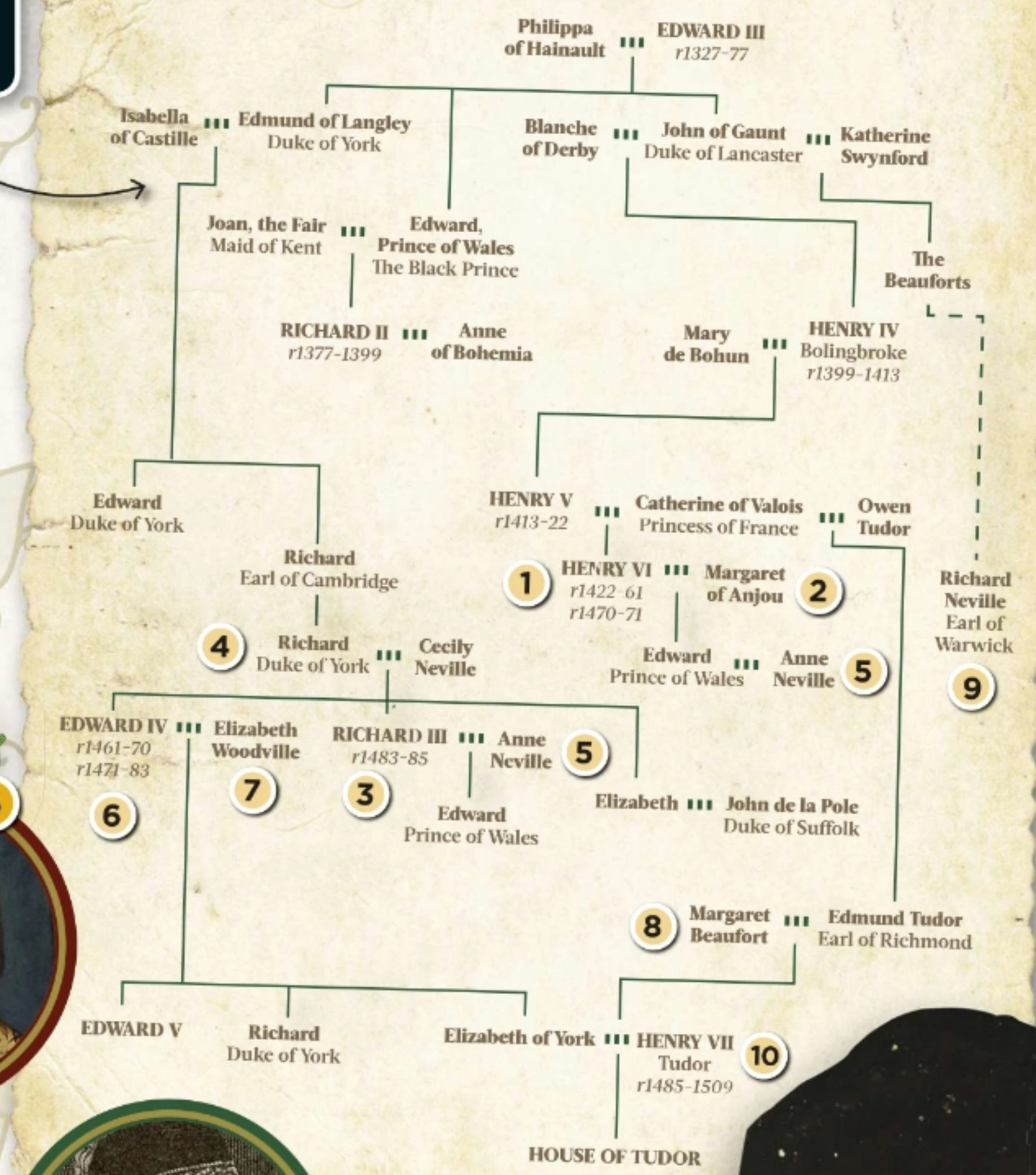
RICHARD III (1452-85)

Although as Duke of Gloucester he had loyally served his brother Edward IV, on the latter's death he ousted his nephew, Edward V, and assumed the throne. Unable to rally much support during his short reign, he was defeated and killed by Henry Tudor at Bosworth in 1485.

3

ALAMY X4, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X4, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK X1

The Wars of the Roses family tree



IN THE FAMILY
It's rumoured that Isabella of Castille had an **illicit affair** with John Holland – step-brother of Richard II, from Joan of Kent's first marriage.

5

Anne Neville

(1456-85)

Anne married Edward, Prince of Wales, to cement an alliance between her father, Warwick 'the Kingmaker', and Edward's mother Margaret of Anjou. After her husband's death at Tewkesbury she married Richard of Gloucester (the future Richard III) and was crowned Queen alongside him in 1483.

Edward IV (1442-83)

Tall, strong and popular with his men, Edward IV became Yorkist leader after his father Richard's death at Wakefield. His victory at Towton secured him the throne. Briefly exiled in 1470, he returned to defeat his enemies at Barnet and Tewkesbury and ruled for a further 12 years before unexpectedly dying at the early age of 41.

6

7

Elizabeth Woodville

(1437-92)

The widow of a Lancastrian knight, Elizabeth married Edward IV in 1464. He favoured her family, thus alienating Warwick 'the Kingmaker'. Her sons, Edward V and Richard Duke of York, disappeared in mysterious circumstances after her husband's death in 1483. Her daughter, Elizabeth, later married Henry VII, uniting the warring factions.

9

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick

(1428-71)

The most powerful noble in the country, Warwick 'the Kingmaker' helped Edward IV attain the crown in 1461. When he saw his influence being eclipsed by the Woodville family, he allied with his former enemy, Margaret of Anjou and restored Henry VI to the throne, only to be killed at the Battle of Barnet in 1471.

8

Margaret Beaufort

(1443-1509)

A descendant of John of Gaunt, Margaret was married to Edmund Tudor at the age of 12. By 13 she was a widow and a mother – of the future Henry VII. She later married Sir Henry Stafford and finally Thomas Stanley, and was involved in the plot to place her son on the throne.

HENRY VII (1457-1509)

Returning to Britain after years of exile, Henry Tudor won the crown at Bosworth. By marrying Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV, he united the houses of Lancaster and York. He died in 1509 when the throne passed to his surviving son, Henry VIII.

10

3

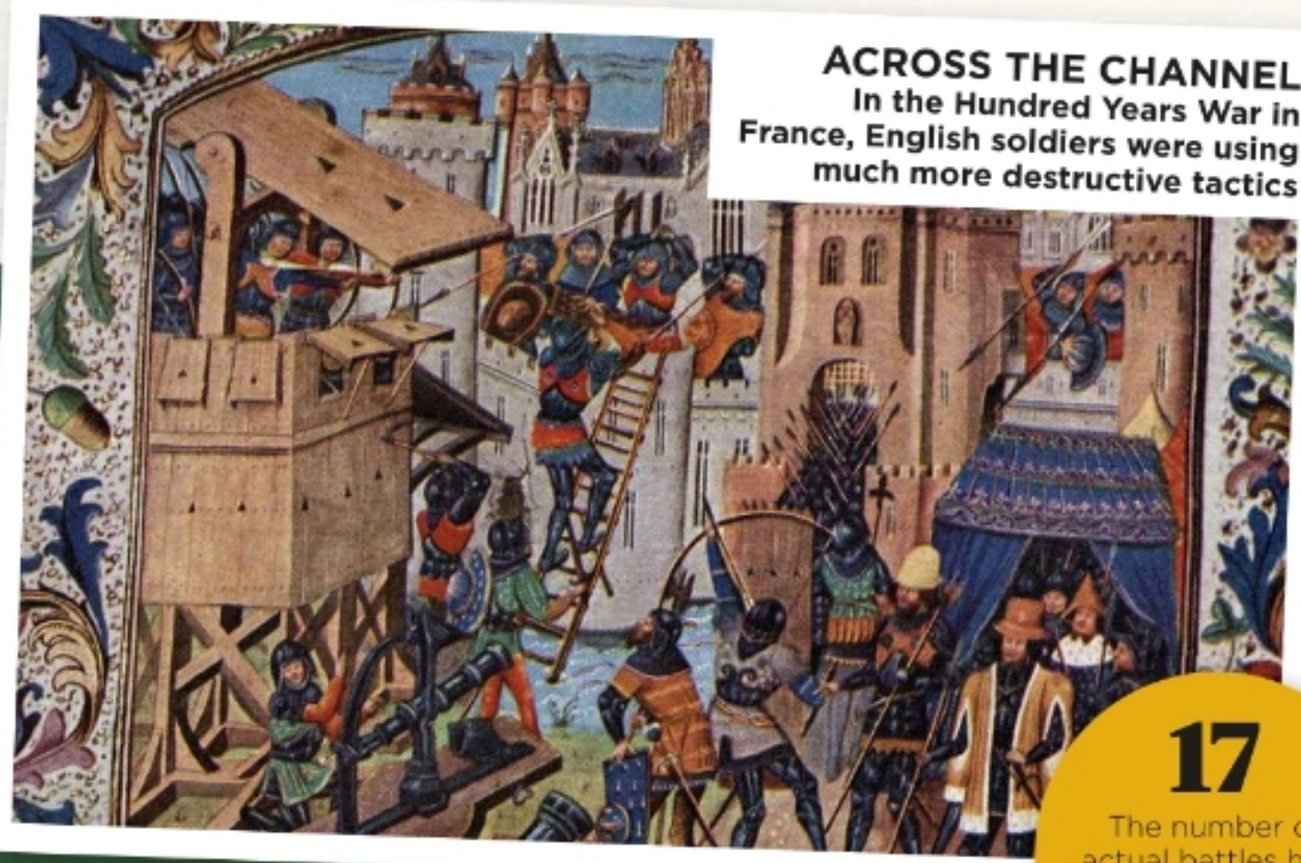
WAR ZONE

The main objective of the fighting was to destroy an enemy's army and kill its leaders

Although men from all over England took part in the Wars, much of the country saw virtually no fighting. Rather than trying to conquer swathes of territory, armies would roam the nation gathering recruits, before seeking out their enemies. As a result, many key battles were fought on or near major routes like the Great North Road or outside big towns like York, Ludlow and London.

Sieges were far from common – the only sustained period of siege warfare took place in the North East, after the Battle of Towton in 1461, when fortifications like Alnwick and Bamburgh changed hands with bewildering regularity. The fighting there finally ended in 1464, when Bamburgh surrendered to the Yorkists. In doing so, it became the first English castle to be battered into submission by gunpowder artillery.

BLOODBATH
The River Cock ran red with blood as the **defeated Lancastrians** struggled to escape across it at Towton.



ACROSS THE CHANNEL
In the Hundred Years War in France, English soldiers were using much more destructive tactics

17
The number of actual battles held during the 30 years of the Wars of the Roses

A FAIR FIGHT

WAR AND PEACE

The image of the Wars as one long unbroken period of bitter bloodshed was partly created by later historians, who exaggerated the evils of the period in order to contrast them with the peace and prosperity of their own age. In fact, campaigns were usually very short, leading one contemporary writer, Philippe de Comynes, to comment that "If any conflict breaks out in England one or other of the rivals is master within ten days or less". This may be a overstatement, but the fact remains that in more than 30 years of 'warfare' there were fewer than 15 months of actual campaigning in the field.

At this time, men of fighting age were often forced to join an army. Towns were occasionally sacked and looted – as troops passed through an area, it was common practice to strip the settlement of supplies and cause a fair degree of destruction. Even so, fighting was more about the elimination of rivals than the conquest of territory; sieges were comparatively rare and England was generally spared the destructive scorched-earth tactics employed by its men in the Hundred Years War. As de Comynes wrote:

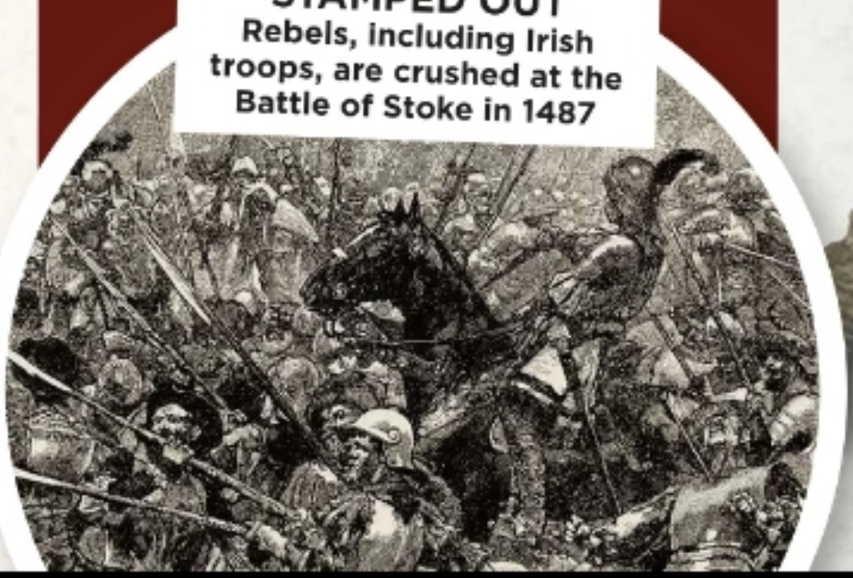
"Out of all the countries which I have personally known, England is the one where public affairs are best conducted and regulated with least violence to the people. There neither the countryside nor the people are destroyed, nor are buildings burnt or demolished. Disaster and misfortune fall only on those who make war, the soldiers and the nobles."

NOSY NEIGHBOURS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

England's neighbours frequently took the chance to intervene in its affairs. Henry VI, the Earl of Warwick and Henry Tudor all received help from France during the Wars.

France's enemies, the Burgundians, favoured the Yorkists, supporting Edward IV and later the Earl of Lincoln in a rebellion against Henry VII. The Scots turned out to help Margaret of Anjou in 1460-61 (and received the town of Berwick in exchange for their support) while the rebel army that was defeated at Stoke (1487) included a large proportion of Irish troops. England's neighbours were happy to play host, too: Calais (which was in English hands) was the Earl of Warwick's base in 1460, Edward IV took refuge in Bruges in 1470 and the young Henry Tudor spent his exile in Brittany.



STAMPED OUT
Rebels, including Irish troops, are crushed at the Battle of Stoke in 1487

ALAMY X1, AKG X1, GETTY X3

MORTAL COMBAT
The Battle of Towton, 1461, was one of the bloodiest clashes on English soil
TOWTON
Edward IV's crushing defeat of the Lancastrians ensured the first phase of the Wars of the Roses would be won by the Yorkists.
ACTION PLAN
BATTLE LAND
With comparatively little fighting going on, the outcome of the war revolved around just a dozen or so major battles. Towton (1461), Tewkesbury (1471) and Bosworth (1485) were all particularly decisive.
KEY
Castles
Churches
Yorkist victory
Lancastrian victory
Tudor victory
Key settlements
Bamburgh
1464 Battle of Hexham
York
1461 Battle of Towton
1460 Battle of Wakefield
1487 Battle of East Stoke
Harlech
BOSWORTH
Triumph for the Tudors, as Richard III's forces are defeated by an army led by the Earl of Oxford. Richard is slain and Henry Tudor becomes King.
Ludlow
1461 Battle of Mortimer's Cross
1485 Battle of Bosworth
Fotheringhay
1460 Battle of Northampton
1471 Battle of Tewkesbury
1469 Battle of Edgcote
Pembroke
Cambridge
1455 and 1461 Battles of St Albans
1471 Battle of Barnet
TEWKESBURY
Round two to the Yorkists as the Lancastrian are defeated and their leadership is all but wiped out.
London
Tower of London
The English Channel

4

INTO BATTLE

The battles may have been few, but each was bitterly fought and hard won...

Nobles may have spent much of their time plotting, scheming, and forging (or breaking) alliances but, ultimately, their power was won and lost on the battlefield. While some battles – notably Towton (1461) – turned into bloodbaths, at most, the main objective was to target a small number of enemy magnates and kill them. First the Battle of St Albans (1455), then Northampton, Wakefield (both 1460) and, of course, Bosworth (1485) all ended this way.

28,000
The number, in thousands, of casualties at Towton, as estimated by Edward IV

Treachery on the battlefield was a terrifying threat during the Wars. At Ludford Bridge (1459), Northampton and Bosworth, leaders changed sides at the last minute with disastrous consequences for their former allies. The Lancastrian armies disintegrated among bitter accusations of treachery at Barnet and Tewkesbury (both 1471), while Henry VII was clearly concerned that he might be undone by treachery at Stoke in 1487.

HEAVY METAL
Such suits of armour could have weighed **from 30-50kgs** – for the average man (weighing around 85kgs), that's up to **60 per cent of his body weight** again.

HARNESS
This full suit of armour was surprisingly easy to move about in, but stiflingly hot to wear. A well-made suit of good-quality steel could keep out an arrow, even at close range, but was eye-wateringly pricey.

SUIT UP
COMBAT ESSENTIALS

Most soldiers brought their own weapons with them on campaign, although archers were supplied with arrows. The average foot soldier used some form of polearm for hand-to-hand combat. This might have been a bill or poleaxe, a glaive (a large knife on a pole), or even a simple spear. The mounted troops might use swords, axes, maces or war-hammers.

While the knight-in-shining-armour image is popular, such protective get-up was extremely expensive and only the very wealthy could afford it. Most merely donned whatever they could lay their hands on – perhaps just a helmet, a padded jack and an odd bit of armour looted from a previous battle.

Gunpowder was, by now, making an appearance on the battlefield. But the relatively high cost and slow rate of fire offered by both cannon and hand guns meant that the longbow remained the dominant missile weapon during the Wars.

JACK
These quilted doublets consisted of layers of fabric stuffed with material. They provided good protection against blades and arrows but became extremely heavy when wet.

BOLLOCK DAGGER
This blade's name comes from the distinctive shape of its handguard. A close-quarter weapon, it could be thrust into the eye slit of a helmet or gaps in armour, or used to finish off a wounded enemy.

BILL
A cheap but handy infantry weapon. Mounted on a pole, its curved cutting blade was fitted with spikes and was used to stab and slice at flesh or tear and hammer at armour.

A: AMY X3, GETTY X1 ROYAL ARMOURIES X5

MEN OF ACTION
ARMIES

Nobles and knights with their retinues of well-trained and well-equipped men-at-arms formed the backbone of most armies at this time. Both sides bolstered their forces through local levies, notably using Commissions of Array – an ancient way of drafting men for service in times of national emergency. Since the late-13th century, every able-bodied man had to have his own polearm or bow and be ready for duty at a day's notice.

Meanwhile, a variety of foreign mercenaries also plied their trade during the Wars. These included Swiss, French, Flemish and German pikemen and specialist troops such as artillerymen and handgunners. A contingent of Burgundian handgunners fought for the Earl of Warwick in 1461 and, ten years later, 500 Flemish handgunners fought for Edward IV. Henry Tudor's victory at Bosworth was, in part, thanks to the French mercenary pikemen in his ranks. And, two years later, a large contingent of fearsome German mercenaries fought vigorously but unsuccessfully against Henry's army at Stoke.

FIRE! A re-enactor fires his handgun, as at Tewkesbury,

"TREACHERY WAS A TERRIFYING THREAT DURING THE WARS"

FIRING LINE
Handguns were becoming **more common** in the 15th century. A fragment of one has been found on the battlefield of Towton.

SHARP SHOOTERS Archers ready their bows at a re-enactment in Hoghton, Lancashire

LONGBOW
Often made of yew with a hemp bowstring, these weapons could be devastating against poorly armoured troops. A skilled archer could shoot ten arrows a minute, with a range of up to 230 metres.

SALLET
This helmet design was common during the Wars. It protected the head and the back of the neck. For additional protection, a soldiers' mouth and throat might be covered by an extra piece of armour called a bevor.

LETHAL WEAPONS Yorkist billmen take to the field at a re-enactment of the Battle of Tewkesbury

ART OF WAR
TACTICS

With little means of commanding an army once battle broke out, tactics had to be uncomplicated. Armies were usually divided into three divisions. Their names reflected their positions on the line of march: vanguard, mainward and rearguard. When they reached the battlefield they would, if time and space allowed, deploy alongside each other: vanguard on the right, rearguard on the left and the mainward – usually with the overall commander – taking the central spot. From this position, the battle plan was most often very simple: defeat the enemy in front of you, then wheel to envelop the rest of the opposing army.

Although horsemen were sometimes used to prevent soldiers deserting or to pursue defeated foes, most fighting was done on foot. Battles often began with an exchange of arrow fire from archers in the front ranks. They would then move aside to allow the men-at-arms, led by heavily armoured knights, to close with the enemy for vicious hand-to-hand combat.

TO THE DEATH
KILL OR BE KILLED

Hand-to-hand combat was violent, bloody and often unbearably hot, especially for those in armour. Even the fittest man would eventually need a break, although whether he could find a way out of the press of bodies to take one was a different matter. What's more, even then he might not be safe. During the Towton campaign, Lords Clifford and Dacre were both hit by arrows after removing their helmets to gain a temporary respite from the stifling heat.

Much of the slaughter took place once a beaten army was on the run. In 1996, grim evidence was uncovered at the Towton battle site in North Yorkshire, when a mass grave of over 40 skeletons – most likely Lancastrians who were cut down as they fled or killed upon capture – was found. All but one of the skulls had evidence of head wounds, suggesting they had either discarded their helmets or had them removed. Many had been struck several times. A square hole found in the skull of one victim was almost certainly caused by the spike on a poleaxe or war-hammer.

WAKING THE DEAD Battle victims found at Towton hint at the bloodshed

POWER COUPLE
Richard III and his wife Anne Neville, immortalised in stained glass

PRINCES IN THE TOWER
Edward V and Richard, Duke of York, who disappeared after their uncle assumed power

FAMILY AFFAIR
Anne and Richard's marriage was **incestuous** by 15th-century standards, as his brother and her sister were married. This made them siblings-in-law which, though the eyes of the time, **made them brother and sister**.

5

FINAL SHOWDOWN

In the last phase of the Wars, competition shifted from York v Lancaster, to Tudor v royals

Edward IV's death, on 9 April 1483, took everyone by surprise. His brother Richard of Gloucester was in the North, while his heir, the 12-year-old Edward, Prince of Wales, was at Ludlow, Shropshire, in the care of his mother's family, the Woodvilles – a house among Richard's enemies. As the Woodvilles travelled to the capital, they were intercepted by Richard, who took charge of his nephew and arrested members of the Woodville faction. Richard of Gloucester assumed Protectorship of the Realm.

Over the following month, preparations were made for the young King's coronation but, on 13 June, Edward IV's old friend William Hastings, who had supported Richard against the Woodvilles, was seized and summarily executed in the Tower. Richard claimed that Hastings had been plotting with the Woodvilles against him, but it may be that Richard had already decided to make himself king and realised that Hastings would never accept the deposition of Edward V. On 16 June, the Archbishop of Canterbury persuaded Elizabeth Woodville to hand over her other son Richard, Duke of York, so he could attend his brother's coronation. The two boys were then housed in the Royal Apartments in the Tower of London. The coronation never took place. On 22 June, it was declared that, because Edward IV had been pre-contracted to marry another woman before he wed Elizabeth Woodville, his marriage to her was invalid and the boys were illegitimate.

5,000
The number of troops that Henry Tudor had at Bosworth. Richard III had 10,000 men

On 26 June, Richard assumed the throne and, ten days later, he and his wife were crowned in a lavish ceremony. But Richard's support was limited. Many of Edward's supporters, especially in the South, were alienated by Richard's seizure.

The first major rebellion against his rule, held in late 1483 and named after one of Richard's former supporters, the Duke of Buckingham, featured a number of members of Edward IV's household. The Yorkists became fatally fractured. This enabled the exiled Henry Tudor, whose claim to the throne was shaky to say the least, to present himself as a viable alternative as monarch, promising to unite the warring houses of Lancaster and York by marrying Edward IV's daughter, Elizabeth.

TALE OF TWO SIDES
RICHARD III

A villain to Shakespeare, a hero to others, King Richard III remains one of England's most controversial monarchs...

GOOD KING RICHARD

Richard's motto was *Loyaltie me lie* ('loyalty binds me') and, until the death of his brother Edward IV, he had indeed been the model of a loyal younger sibling. He had fought alongside Edward at the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury (both 1471), had been an effective deputy in the North and steered clear of the irresponsible plotting that led to the downfall of his other brother George, Duke of Clarence.

When he became King, Richard remained loyal – too loyal, arguably – to his Northern friends and supporters. He also made a promising start as a lawmaker with reforms to the legal system, including an extension of the bail system. His laws were the first to be published in English. And there's no denying his bravery: even hostile Tudor chroniclers commented on his heroic death at Bosworth (1485).

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X4, SIMON LEACH X1

BISHOP TAKES PAWN
The young Richard, Duke of York, leaves his mother, Elizabeth Woodville, at the Archbishop of Canterbury's request

"RICHARD TOOK CHARGE OF HIS NEPHEW, AND PROTECTORSHIP OF THE REALM"

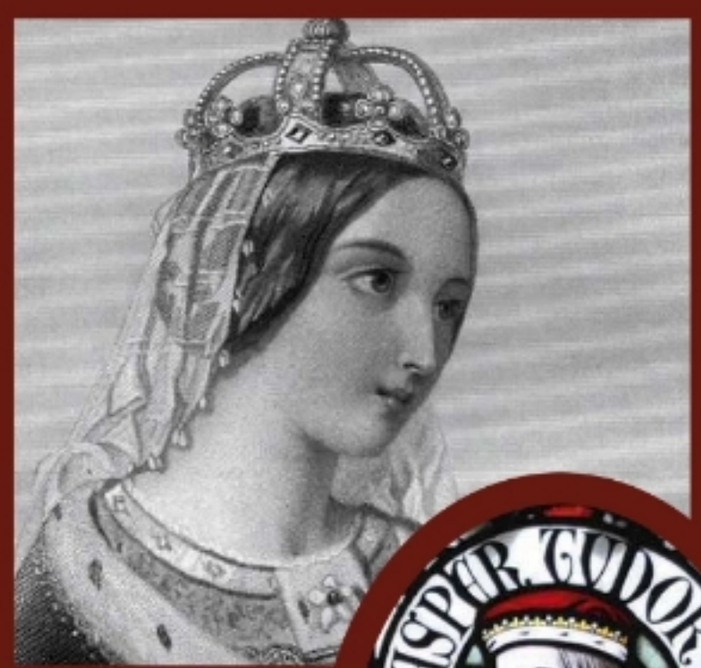
THE VILLAINOUS PART

It is not known exactly why Richard seized the throne in 1483, although Shakespeare's depiction of a man harbouring a long-held ambition to be King can almost certainly be discounted. It may be that he did so to protect himself from his enemies, notably the Woodvilles. Whatever his motives, his methods would have certainly filled his brother, Edward, with horror. Within months of the King's death, Richard had attacked Edward's widow's family, killed his best friend William Hastings, and had his sons declared bastards before locking them in the Tower of London. The Princes in the Tower were never seen again after Richard III took the throne. Contemporaries came to believe they were dead and, for many, the finger of suspicion pointed squarely at Richard.

THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT
Laurence Olivier plays Shakespeare's nefarious villain in *Richard III* (1955)

METHOD ACTING
Olivier was **shot in the leg** by an arrow during filming, so for much of the performance, his historically-inaccurate limp is real.

ANTI-HERO
The 18th-century actor David Garrick also took the lead in the Bard's *Richard III*



KITH AND KIN
TOP: **Catherine of Valois – Henry's grandmother**
ABOVE: **Henry's uncle, Jasper Tudor**

DYNASTY BUILDER

HENRY TUDOR

Henry Tudor was born at Pembroke Castle in January 1457. His mother Margaret Beaufort was a widow, and just 13 years of age at the time.

He grew up during the Wars of the Roses and lived for many years in the household of the Yorkist William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke until his host was killed at the Battle of Edgcote in 1469. When Warwick 'the Kingmaker' restored Henry VI in 1470, Henry's uncle Jasper Tudor returned from exile and brought Henry to court. However, when Edward regained the throne in 1471, Henry was forced abroad once more, this time to Brittany. For some 14 years, he was a mere political pawn but, by the 1480s, almost every other Lancastrian male in line to the throne had been slaughtered, leaving him as something of the last man standing: "the only impe now left of King Henry the VI's blood," as one chronicler put it. Even so, he only became a serious contender after Richard III seized the throne, dividing the Yorkist establishment, and the Princes in the Tower disappeared.

Henry's claim to the throne in 1485 was still pretty tenuous, though he did have some royal blood on both sides of his family. He was the grandson of Henry V's French Queen, Catherine of Valois, but through her illicit second marriage to Owen Tudor. The link on the other side was much flimsier. His mother was the eldest child of the eldest son of Edward III's son, John of Gaunt, and his mistress Katherine Swynford. The pair later married but their children were barred from succession. In fact, it has been estimated that nearly 30 people had a better claim to the throne than Henry Tudor in 1485.

TIMELINE The Wars of the

From the death of one Henry to the triumph of another at Bosworth, England

31 AUGUST 1422

Henry V dies and his succeeded by the infant Henry VI. England is ruled by a regency council until he comes of age. In 1445, he marries Margaret of Anjou, niece of Charles VII of France. By 1453, England has lost all its French territory, except Calais, in the Hundred Years War.

The ten-year-old Henry VI is crowned King of France in 1431

8 JULY 1450

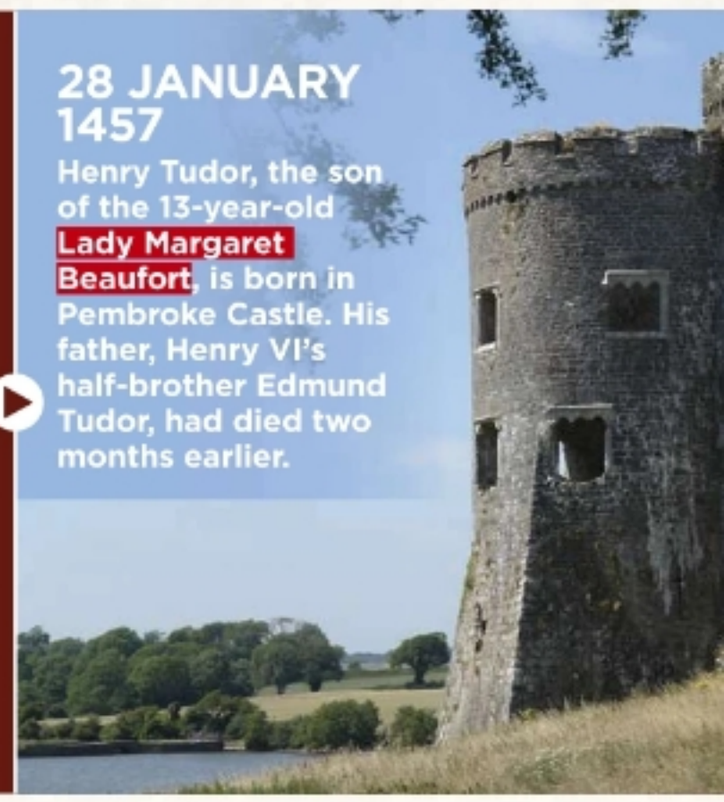
A rebellion against the perceived corruption of Henry's government is suppressed. Richard of York presses for political power.

22 MAY 1455

After being excluded from a planned council of nobles, Richard of York and the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick 'the Kingmaker' attack the royal household at St Albans and kill a number of their enemies. King Henry is captured, and York reclaims the title of Lord Protector.

28 JANUARY 1457

Henry Tudor, the son of the 13-year-old Lady Margaret Beaufort, is born in Pembroke Castle. His father, Henry VI's half-brother Edmund Tudor, had died two months earlier.



2 OCTOBER 1470

Edward IV flees to Burgundy to escape the alliance of Warwick and Margaret of Anjou. Henry VI regains the crown.

26 JULY 1469

A rebel force loyal to Warwick, who has defected to the Lancastrian cause, defeats a royalist army at the Battle of Edgcote in Northamptonshire. Edward IV is briefly imprisoned.

15 MAY 1464

Yorkist victory at Hexham ends Lancastrian resistance in the North. The Lancastrian leader Somerset is beheaded. Henry VI goes on the run but is captured the following year.

1464

Edward IV marries Elizabeth Woodville in secret (possibly on 1 May). Royal favour bestowed on the Woodville family alienates Warwick.

29 MARCH 1461

Declared Edward IV by his supporters (led by Warwick), Edward of March defeats the Lancastrians at the bloody Battle of Towton. He is crowned King in June.

14 APRIL 1471

Having returned to England and entered London without opposition, Edward IV defeats and kills Warwick at the Battle of Barnet, Hertfordshire.

Margaret of Anjou is taken prisoner at Tewkesbury

4 MAY 1471

Edward defeats the Lancastrian army of Margaret of Anjou at Tewkesbury. Henry and Margaret's son (also Edward) is killed and Henry himself dies in the Tower of London on 21 May – almost certainly murdered.

18 FEBRUARY 1478

Edward's rebellious brother George, Duke of Clarence, is convicted of treason and is privately executed in the Tower of London.

9 APRIL 1483

Edward IV dies and is succeeded by his young son, Edward V. Richard of Gloucester, brother of Edward IV, is named Protector and he wrests control of the new King and his young brother from the Woodvilles.

A stained-glass portrait of Edward V graces Little Malvern Priory, Worcestershire

ALAMY X1, AKG X1, GETTY X9, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK X3, TOPFOTO X1

Roses

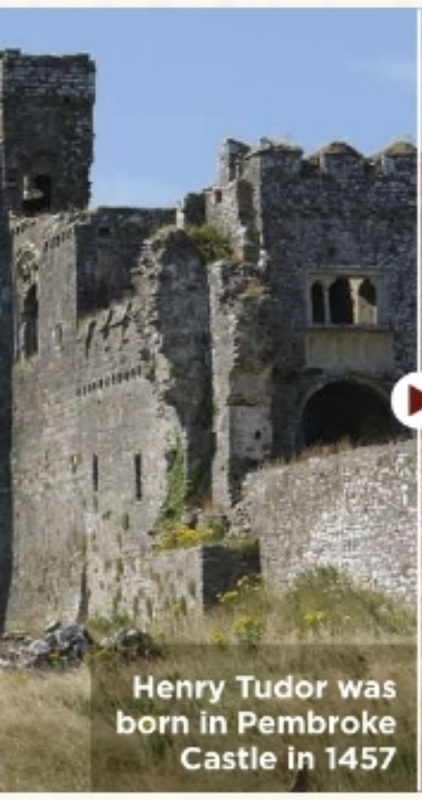
endured decades of intermittent conflict

HOUSE OF YORK

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

ROYAL HOUSE OF TUDOR

SWITCHED SIDES



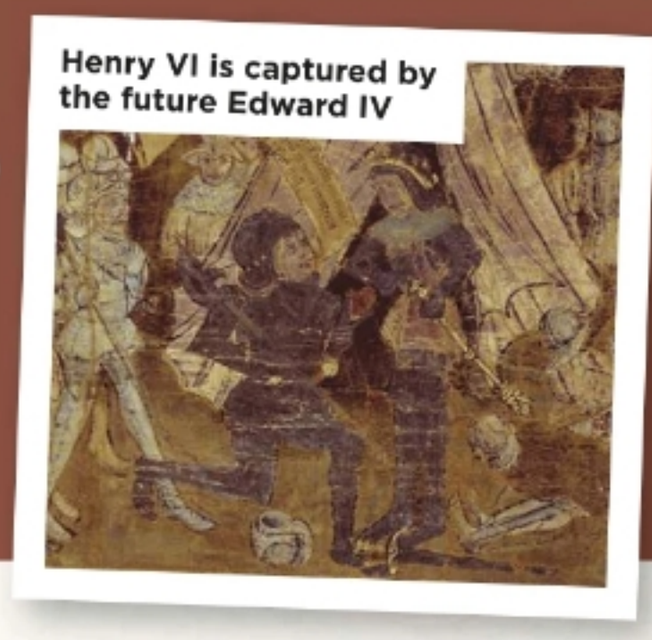
Henry Tudor was born in Pembroke Castle in 1457

12 OCTOBER 1459

York, Salisbury and Warwick assemble an army at Ludlow, Shropshire, to challenge the royal army, but flee when one of their senior commanders defects to Henry VI.

10 JULY 1460

York's son Edward of March (later Edward IV) and Warwick capture Henry VI at the Battle of Northampton.



Henry VI is captured by the future Edward IV

3 AUGUST 1460

James II of Scotland is killed by an exploding cannon while laying siege to the English-held Roxburgh Castle, which had been in English hands since the Scottish Wars of Independence.

10 OCTOBER 1460

York returns to London and lays claim to the throne. The nobility is unwilling to depose an anointed king, but compromise with an Act of Accord that keeps Henry VI on the throne but declares York his heir.

17 FEBRUARY 1461

The Lancastrians defeat Warwick at St Albans, recapture Henry VI and march on London. The city will not admit them and they retire north, pursued by Yorkists.

2 FEBRUARY 1461

Victory for York's son Edward of March as the Battle of Mortimer's Cross blocks Lancastrian reinforcements coming from Wales.

York is killed by Henry's forces at Sandal Castle

30 DECEMBER 1460

York is ambushed and killed outside Sandal Castle near Wakefield. The Earl of Rutland, York's son, is executed, as is the Earl of Salisbury, father of Warwick 'the Kingmaker'.

6 JULY 1483

Richard has Edward V and his brother declared illegitimate (claiming that their parents' marriage was invalid), and is himself crowned in Westminster Abbey. Edward V and his brother – the 'Princes in the Tower' – disappear from view and after the summer are never seen again.

22 AUGUST 1485

Henry Tudor defeats and kills Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in Leicestershire. Henry, despite his tenuous claim to the throne through his mother (see page 63), is crowned in Westminster Abbey on 30 October.

18 JANUARY 1486

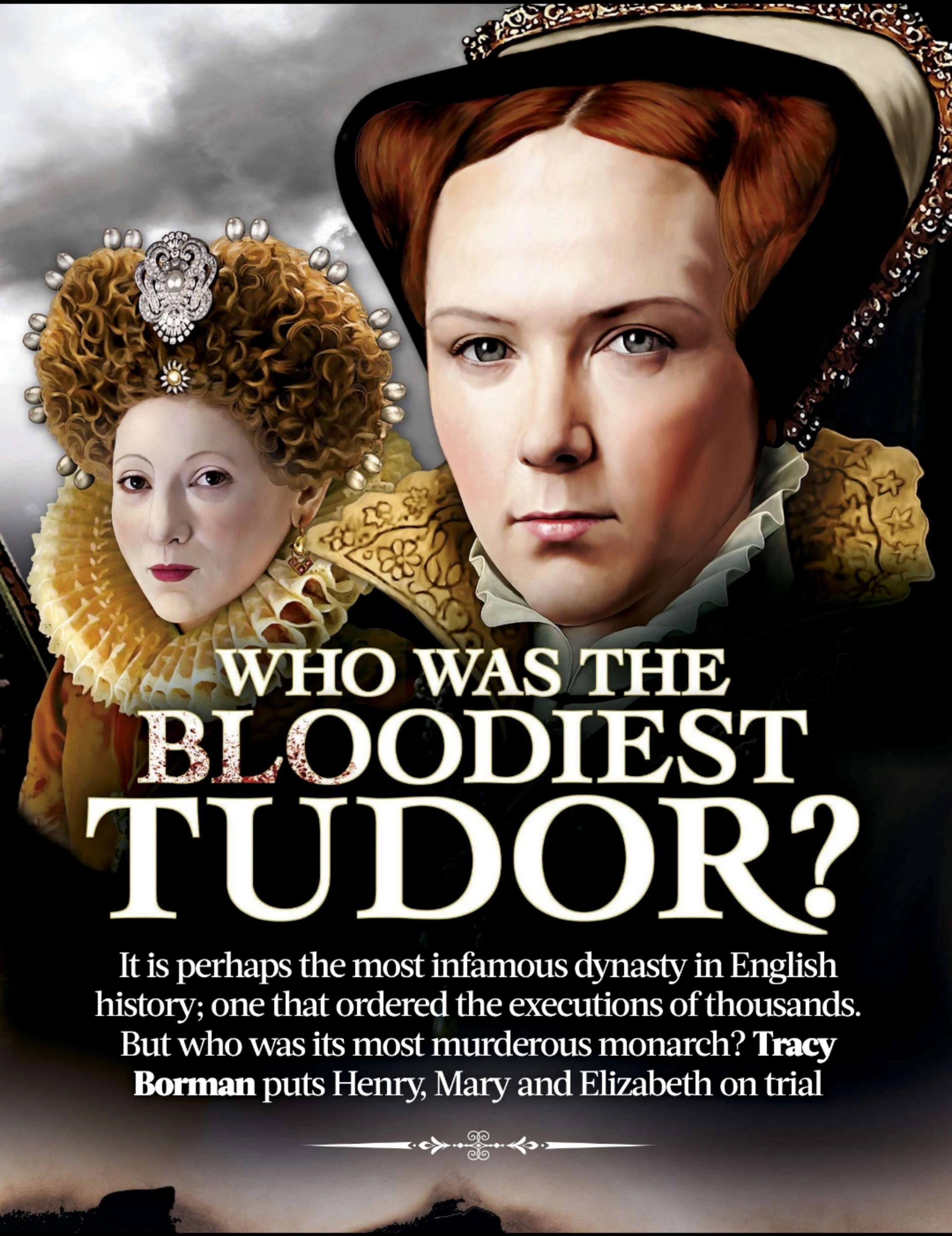
Henry VII marries Elizabeth of York, the eldest daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, uniting the houses of Lancaster and York.

16 JUNE 1487

Henry defeats Lambert Simnel's Rebellion (a rising by supporters of Richard III) at the Battle of Stoke – the last real action of the Wars of the Roses.

HONOUR & HERESY
Both Catholics and Protestants suffered at the hands of their Tudor monarchs

ILLUSTRATION: JEAN-MICHEL GIRARD/WWW.THE-ART-AGENCY.CO.UK, GETTY X1



WHO WAS THE BLOODIEST TUDOR?

It is perhaps the most infamous dynasty in English history; one that ordered the executions of thousands. But who was its most murderous monarch? **Tracy Borman** puts Henry, Mary and Elizabeth on trial

BLOOD ON HER HANDS
Hundreds died due to Mary's obsession with returning England to the Roman Catholic faith

37
The age at which Mary became queen, making her the oldest Tudor monarch to take the throne

NEXT IN LINE
Following **Edward's early death**, and the brief coup that led to **Lady Jane Grey** being installed as queen, Mary rallied her supporters and **claimed the throne**.

Mary I is not the best known of the Tudors. Her brief reign, and that of her brother Edward, tend to be overshadowed by the looming presence of her father, Henry VIII, and his more famous daughter, Elizabeth I. If Mary is referred to at all, then it is as 'Bloody'. It is certainly true that her obsession with returning England to the Roman Catholic faith led her to send hundreds of Protestants to the flames. But was she really as bloody as her nickname suggests, especially when compared to the other Tudors? Was there more to her than the serious and intensely pious woman who has attracted little attention or sympathy? Scratching beneath the surface of this stereotypical version reveals a very different queen – and woman – to the traditional pantomime villain of history.

At 4am on 18 February 1516, Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife, was delivered of a daughter, Mary. The child might not have been the son that the King so craved, but she was at least healthy – and given Catherine's experience of childbirth, that was something to be thankful for.

If Henry had known that Mary would be the only child to survive from his first marriage, he might have dispatched with Catherine sooner. As it was, although he delighted in his newborn daughter, his thoughts were firmly focused upon begetting a son, and quickly. One child was not enough to show for seven years of marriage, and Henry needed a son to pass his crown to.

Although her sex had been a disappointment, Mary was raised with all of the care and luxury expected for a royal princess. She learned the typical courtly skills of music, dancing and riding, and was tutored by the celebrated humanist, Juan Luis Vives. Mary, then Henry's cherished only child, grew into an attractive and accomplished young girl and Henry proudly showed her off to visiting ambassadors, who all praised her virtues. Gasparo Spinelli, the Venetian Secretary in London, described her long red hair "as beautiful as ever seen on a human head", with a "well proportioned" figure and "pretty face... with a very beautiful complexion". He also told of how the young princess "much beloved of her father" had danced with the French ambassador, "who considered her very handsome, and admirable by reason of her great and uncommon mental endowments".

"Mary's world fell apart when her father annulled his marriage to her mother"

As the daughter of the King of England, Mary was a great prize in the international marriage market, and from an early age was courted by a number of impressive foreign suitors. But at the age of 17, her world fell apart when her father had

GETTY X4

TUDOR DYNASTY
Henry VIII was King of England from 21 April 1509 until his death in 1547. Left of Henry is Edward, to his right is Jane Seymour, his third wife. Far left is Mary and far right is her half-sister Elizabeth

his marriage to her mother annulled so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. At a stroke, Mary was reduced from a princess to a mere 'lady' and was removed from the order of succession. In vain, she railed against the woman whom she and her ally, the Imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys, called "the concubine". But Anne failed where Mary's mother had: she gave Henry only a daughter, Elizabeth.

KIND AND MATERNAL

Mary was both a kind and maternal young woman and, after Anne's fall, she took pity on her half-sister. As well as urging her father not to forget his younger daughter, she also bestowed thoughtful little gifts on the young girl, aware that the regular supply of luxurious clothes and other adornments from her mother, Anne Boleyn, had ceased abruptly. In 1538, for example, she gave Elizabeth a box embroidered with silver thread. The following year, she employed William Ibgrave, her father's embroiderer, to make her six-year-old sister "a coat of crimson satin, embroidered with gold".

Anne Boleyn's execution initially seemed to transform Mary's fortunes. She was summoned to court by her father, who, according to Chapuys, "made much of her" and gave her "many

CATHOLIC OR PROTESTANT?

Henry's actions had deadly consequences when Mary took the throne

The 16th century witnessed unprecedented upheaval in the religious beliefs and practices both in England and across Europe. Henry VIII's desire for an annulment from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, sparked religious turmoil in his kingdom because in order to secure it he had to reject papal authority and make himself head of a new Church of England. But by the time of Henry's death, England was still a Catholic country. Only during the reign of his son, Edward, and later his younger daughter Elizabeth, did the kingdom fully adopt the new Protestant ideas that were sweeping across Europe. Mary's short reign was sandwiched in between the two, and she temporarily restored England to the Roman Catholic fold. But the burning of the Protestant 'heretics' evoked widespread revulsion and paved the way to a more tolerant religious future for the kingdom.

The Reformation in Europe had really got underway with the publication of the German reformer Martin Luther's *95 Theses* in 1517. These criticised many of the practices of the Roman Catholic church, notably the sale of indulgences, which reduced the time spent in purgatory. Luther's radical ideas soon took hold and became known as Protestantism. They were developed further by the likes of John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli, who sought the true teachings of God from the gospel, rather than through the intercession of priests. One of the most divisive issues surrounded the Eucharist. The Catholics argued that the bread and wine were transformed into Christ's body and blood during the ceremony, whereas the Protestants affirmed that it was more symbolic. As the century progressed, each religious camp developed more radical sects, which intensified the hostility between them.

A CHURCH DIVIDED
Luther's ***95 Theses*** attacked the Catholic church's corrupt practice of selling 'indulgences' to absolve sin, sparking the Protestant Reformation, which **split the church in two**.

THE NEW RELIGION
German reformer Martin Luther's radical ideas took hold in the 16th century, becoming known as Protestantism

jewels belonging to the unjust Queen". But if Mary thought that she would now be automatically restored to her place in the succession and given back the title of princess, she was mistaken. Henry had no intention of revoking the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon after all the religious and political upheaval that it had caused. He persisted in trying to force Mary to accept her illegitimate status.

At first, Mary refused to give in, determined to honour her mother's memory. Even Henry's most skilled minister, Thomas Cromwell, failed to persuade her, and in exasperation declared: "To be plain with you, I think you the most obstinate woman that ever was." The Dukes of Norfolk and Sussex were sent to demand Mary's submission, and when she continued to resist, they brutally told her that "If she was their daughter, they would beat her and knock her head so violently against the wall that they would make it as soft as baked apples."

Resolute and principled though she was, Mary was not entirely devoid of political awareness and, submitting to the persuasions of Chapuys, who urged her to push home her advantage and be restored to the King's favour, she reluctantly agreed to acknowledge that her parents' marriage had been invalid and her father was the Supreme Head of the Church. She was said to be deeply aggrieved ever after at what she saw as a betrayal of her beloved late mother.

When Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour, gave birth to a healthy son, Edward, in 1537, Mary's chances of inheriting the throne seemed distant once more. Again, though, her strong maternal instinct won out over any resentment that she might have felt against this new sibling. She showed her little brother every kindness and sent him a succession of gifts. Even when Edward became king and began to put into practice his Protestant beliefs, which were anathema to Mary, she continued to show him every courtesy and respect.

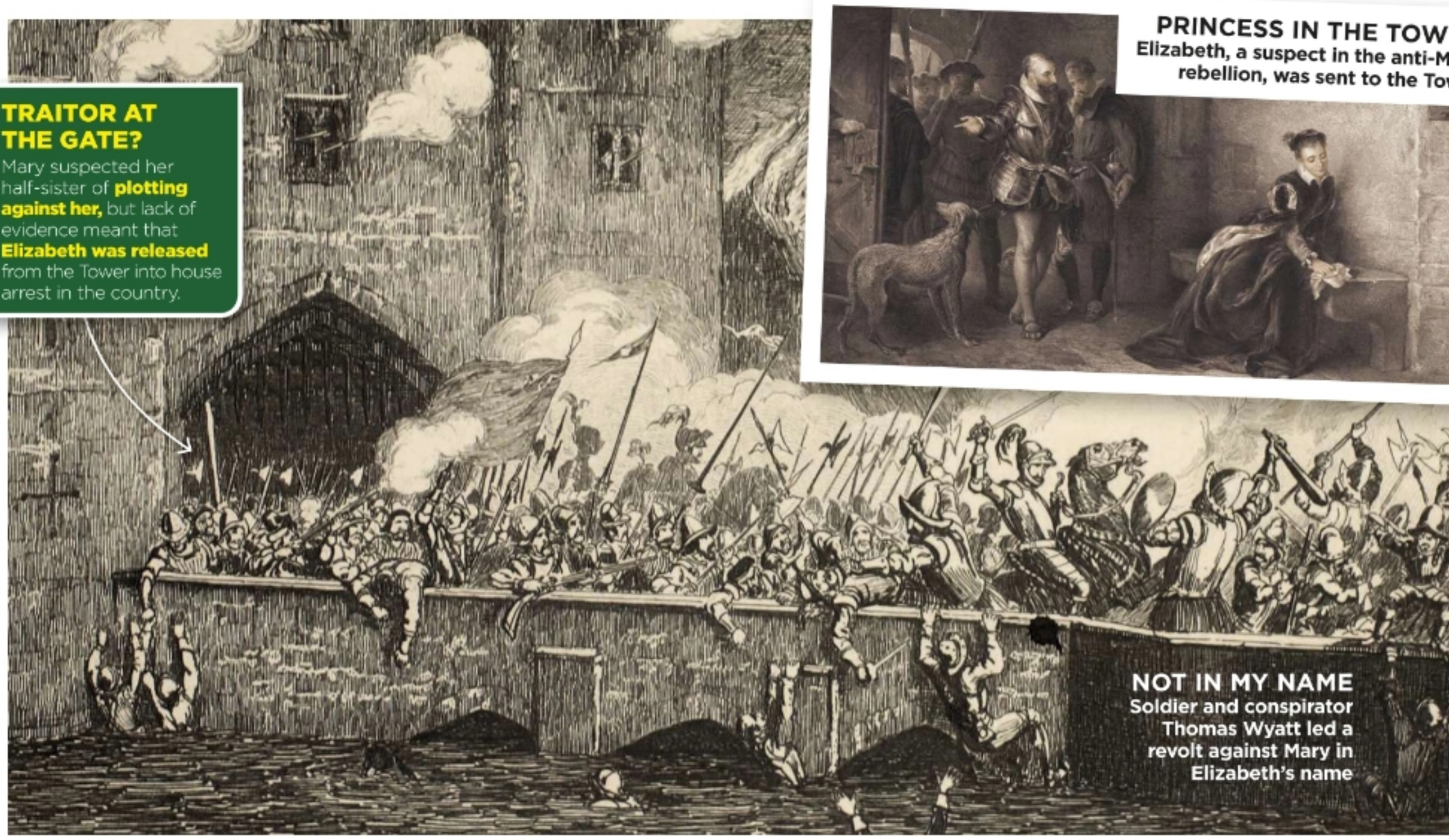
COINING IT
Commemorative shilling for the 1554 marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary I of England

> **"Although a female ruler was seen as undesirable, Mary was the true heir"**

But Edward would reign for just six years, before succumbing to tuberculosis in July 1553. After a brief coup that led to Lady Jane Grey being installed as queen, Mary rallied her considerable body of supporters and claimed the throne, prompting a wave of popular rejoicing. There were street parties across the capital and lively celebrations throughout the realm. Although it was seen as undesirable, to say the least, to have a female ruler – the first in more than 400 years – as the eldest surviving child of Henry VIII, Mary was the only true heir in the eyes of her subjects.

DETERMINED TO WED

The popular rejoicing proved shortlived, however. Mary soon expressed her determination to marry Philip of Spain, and the wedding took place in July 1554. The anti-Spanish feeling that followed was overwhelming and, in terms of Mary's authority as queen, disastrous. Already, there had been a rebellion against it, led by Thomas Wyatt. Mary's own sister, Elizabeth, was suspected of involvement and only narrowly escaped with her life after a spell in the Tower.



TRAITOR AT THE GATE?
Mary suspected her half-sister of **plotting against her,** but lack of evidence meant that **Elizabeth was released** from the Tower into house arrest in the country.

PRINCESS IN THE TOWER
Elizabeth, a suspect in the anti-Mary rebellion, was sent to the Tower

NOT IN MY NAME
Soldier and conspirator Thomas Wyatt led a revolt against Mary in Elizabeth's name

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X2, GETTY X3

Tudors on trial

HENRY VIII

'Bloody' sits better with Henry's name when you consider the thousands slaughtered at his command

Mary may have the reputation as the bloodiest of the Tudors, but it was her father, Henry VIII, who sent more men and women to their deaths than any other member of the dynasty. Thanks to the contemporary records being patchy and inconsistent, it is impossible to quantify exactly how many people were put to death at his orders. Estimates vary wildly from a few thousand to as many as 72,000.

Henry's break with Rome and marriage to Anne Boleyn sparked the first big wave of executions. His chief minister Thomas Cromwell devised the Oath of Supremacy, which affirmed the validity of his second marriage, as well as his position as Head of the Church of England. Many hundreds refused to take it, including – most famously – Thomas More, former Lord Chancellor and close friend of the King.

As Henry grew ever more paranoid and tyrannical during the last ten years of his reign, the Tower of London was crowded with the terrified subjects who had been imprisoned at his orders. He did not flinch from sending even those closest to him to the block – including two of his wives.

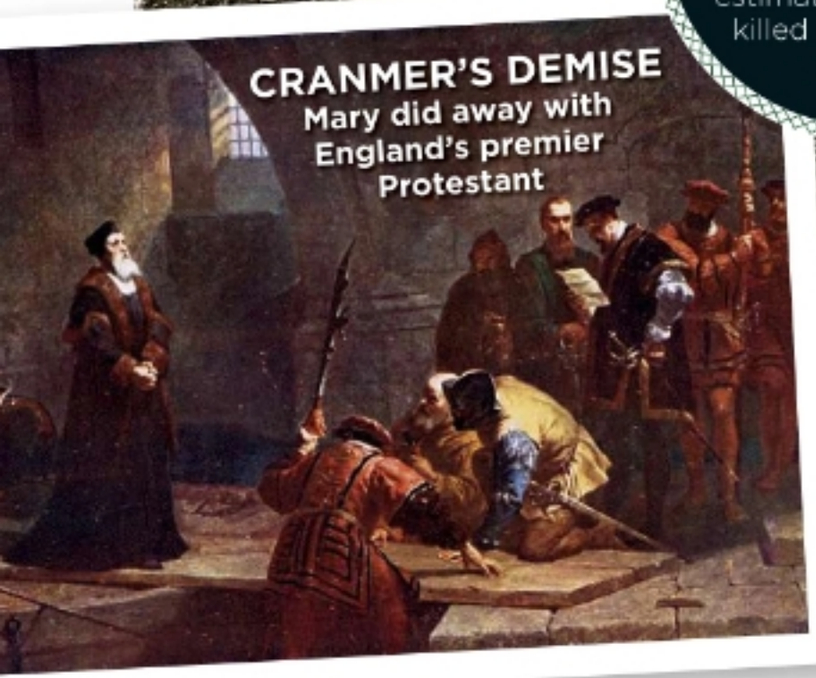
What makes Henry VIII the most 'bloody' of the Tudors is not just the number of his victims, but his motivation in putting them to death. Whereas his father, Henry VII, and his children, Mary, Edward and Elizabeth, confined their personal vengeance to those who had either raised or supported a rebellion, or threatened the stability of the realm in some other way, Henry had a staggering number of people executed for little more than their failure to bend to his personal will. Thus, for example, Thomas Cromwell went to the block on trumped up charges of treason, none of which would have been proved if Henry had bothered with a trial; and the real reason that Anne Boleyn was executed was her failure to give Henry a living male child, rather than her supposed adultery.

TUDOR TYRANT
MAIN: **Henry had people executed not because they threatened the monarchy, but simply because they failed to do what he wanted**
BELOW: **Victims included Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, his second wife**

CHOPPING BLOCK
When former Lord Chancellor **Thomas More** refused to take an oath affirming Henry's position as Head of the Church, **the King ordered his beheading**.

ETERNAL DAMNATION
Mary's **persecution of Protestants** was driven by her desire to **'save their souls'**.

283
The number of Protestants that Mary sent to their death. It's estimated that Henry killed up to 72,000 people


CRANMER'S DEMISE
Mary did away with England's premier Protestant

HELL FIRE
Ten Protestants at Lewes, Sussex, burn at the stake

Mary's growing unpopularity had another cause. A devout Roman Catholic, she had abhorred her father's Reformation and the Protestant reforms of her brother Edward and, as soon as she became queen, she declared it her most urgent priority to restore England to the papal fold. Her first parliament overturned her brother Edward's religious reforms, and her husband persuaded a later parliament to abolish Henry VIII's religious laws too. A reconciliation with the papacy soon followed. Driven on by an evangelising zeal, Mary ordered increasingly drastic measures in order to bring any dissenters to heel, not flinching from burning those subjects who persisted in their 'heretical' beliefs.

The executions began in February 1555 and continued until the end of Mary's brief and bloody reign, resulting in the deaths of 283 Protestants – including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. The victims of her persecutions were lauded as martyrs. Their fate sealed Mary's reputation as the bloodiest monarch in history.

But while there is no doubting the severity of her treatment of those whom she regarded as heretics, Mary acted out of conscience, not brutality. Blinded by her own faith, she genuinely believed that she was saving her subjects from eternal damnation by bringing them into the Roman Catholic fold.

"Mary's reputation as the bloodiest monarch in history was sealed"

The Protestant burnings go a long way towards explaining the reputation that Mary has suffered ever since, but there are other causes. Mary's physical appearance contributed to the view that she was a serious and cruel woman. As she entered London for the first time as queen, the crowds who had gathered to welcome her noticed that she appeared distant and aloof. In fact, Mary was far from aloof, but was naturally introspective and awkward in company. She lacked her father's charisma and charm, and that of her half-sister Elizabeth.

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

A small, thin woman, the turmoil and ill health that Mary had suffered for much of her adult life had aged her prematurely. Her appearance was not helped by the fact that she had lost nearly all of her teeth in her 20s. Among her most noticeable features were her eyes, which Mario Savorgnano, the Venetian ambassador, described as so piercing that they "inspire, not only respect, but fear, in those on whom she fixes them". In fact, Mary's tendency to stare intently at people was due more to her severe short-sightedness than an intention to intimidate. She also possessed a gruff, manly voice, which Savorgnano reported was "rough and

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X4

Tudors on trial

ELIZABETH I

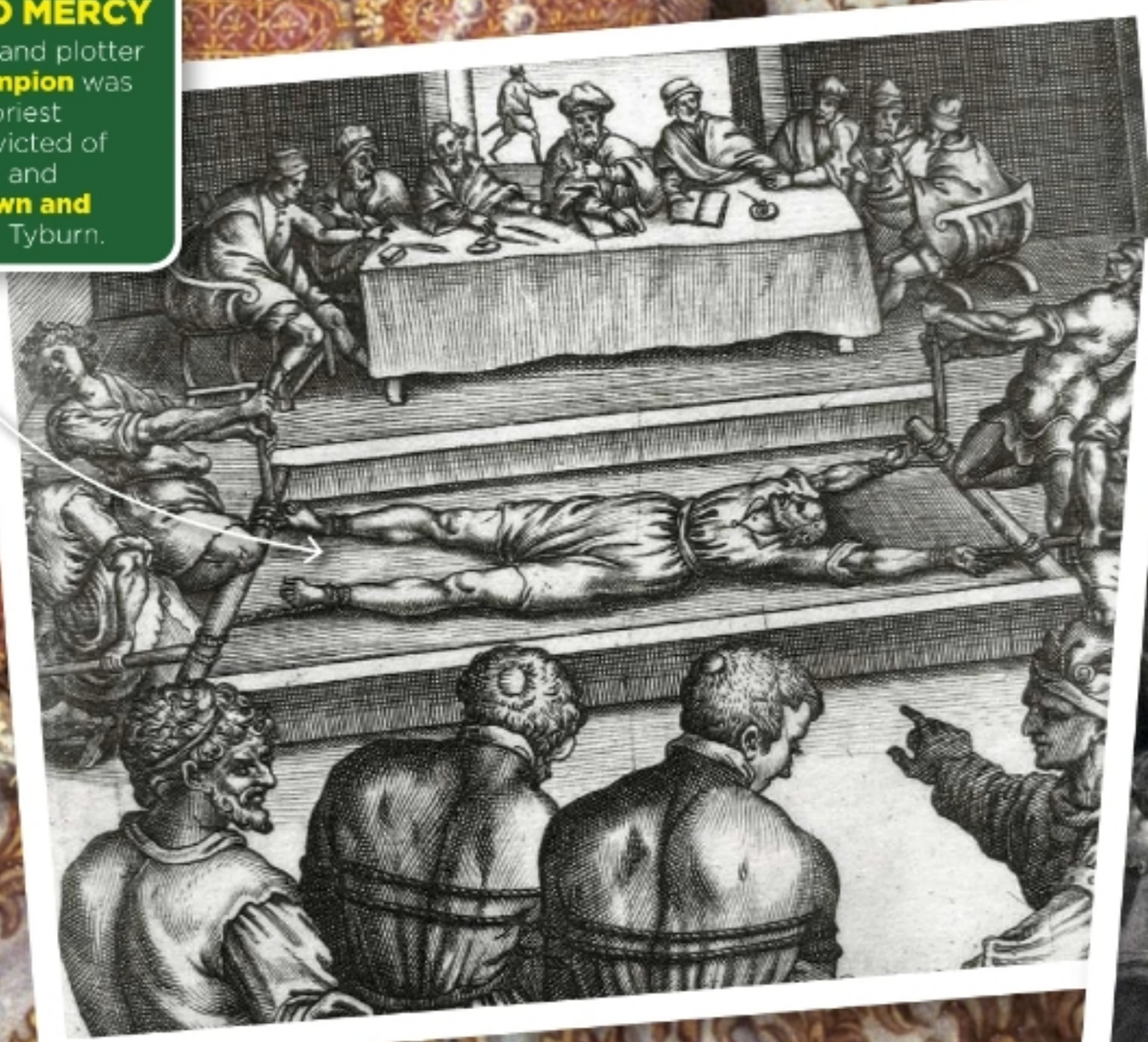
Her long reign was punctuated by conspiracies and assassination fears. Elizabeth, however, was up to the job

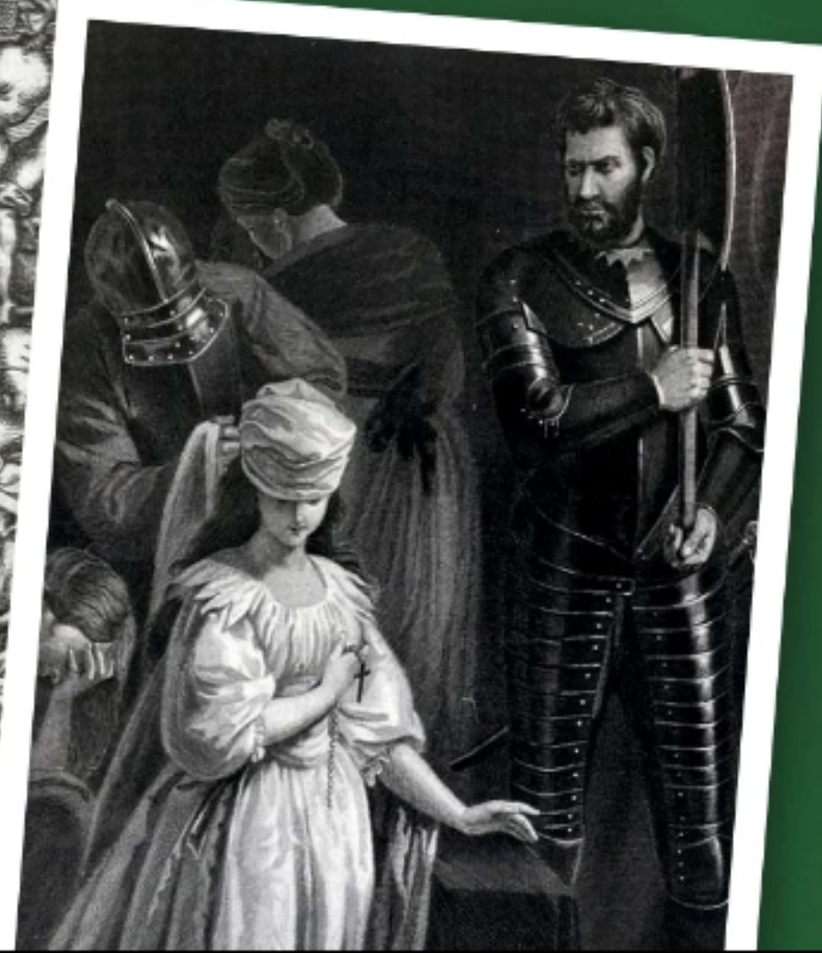
Elizabeth I may have a reputation as a tolerant and moderate queen, but she did not flinch from putting rebellious subjects to death. Fears for her security mounted after Pope Pius V issued a bull of excommunication against her in 1570. This encouraged her Catholic subjects to rise against her and led to numerous plots and conspiracies. Many of these aimed to place the captive Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne. In the end, Elizabeth was persuaded to put her rival to death, but this did little to quell the Catholic threat, and Elizabeth continued to be plagued by the fear of assassination.

Like her father, Elizabeth grew bloodier during the later years of her reign, when the rise of an extreme branch of Catholicism, known as Jesuitism, inspired a rash of new conspiracies. Thanks to Elizabeth's excellent spy network, most of the plotters were arrested and thrown into the Tower. They included Edmund Campion, who before being executed at Tyburn on 1 December 1581, gave a defiant warning to Protestant England: "Touching our Society, be it known unto you that we have made a league... cheerfully to carry the cross that you shall lay upon us and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to be consumed with your prisons."

Campion was one of about 130 priests executed for religious treason in Elizabeth's reign. A further 60 of their lay supporters were also put to death. If Elizabeth was less bloody than her sister and father, however, it is interesting to note that she employed torture more than in any other English reign. She might have been a "weak and feeble woman", but she evidently had the "heart and stomach" that were needed to defend her throne.

SHOW NO MERCY
Jesuit priest and plotter **Edmund Campion** was arrested by priest hunters, convicted of high treason, and **hanged, drawn and quartered** at Tyburn.





BATTLE FOR THE CROWN
MAIN: **Elizabeth I, who was queen from 1558 to 1603, was the last Tudor monarch** BELOW: **Mary Stuart, briefly Queen of Scotland, was executed at Fotheringay Castle in 1587 on Elizabeth's orders. Her Roman Catholic beliefs were seen as a threat to the crown**

WEDDED BLISS? Philip of Spain and Mary I of England married in 1554. Neither her politicians nor the public approved

FAMILY PLANNING
Mary knew that to prevent her Protestant half-sister Elizabeth from succeeding her, **she needed to marry a Catholic and produce an heir** to secure a Catholic succession.

THE SPANISH MARRIAGE

A female ruler with a Spanish Catholic husband? It was all too much for the English people. And, while Mary was besotted with Philip – the dashing heir to the Spanish throne – her feelings weren't reciprocated. He sought the marriage merely for political and strategic gains

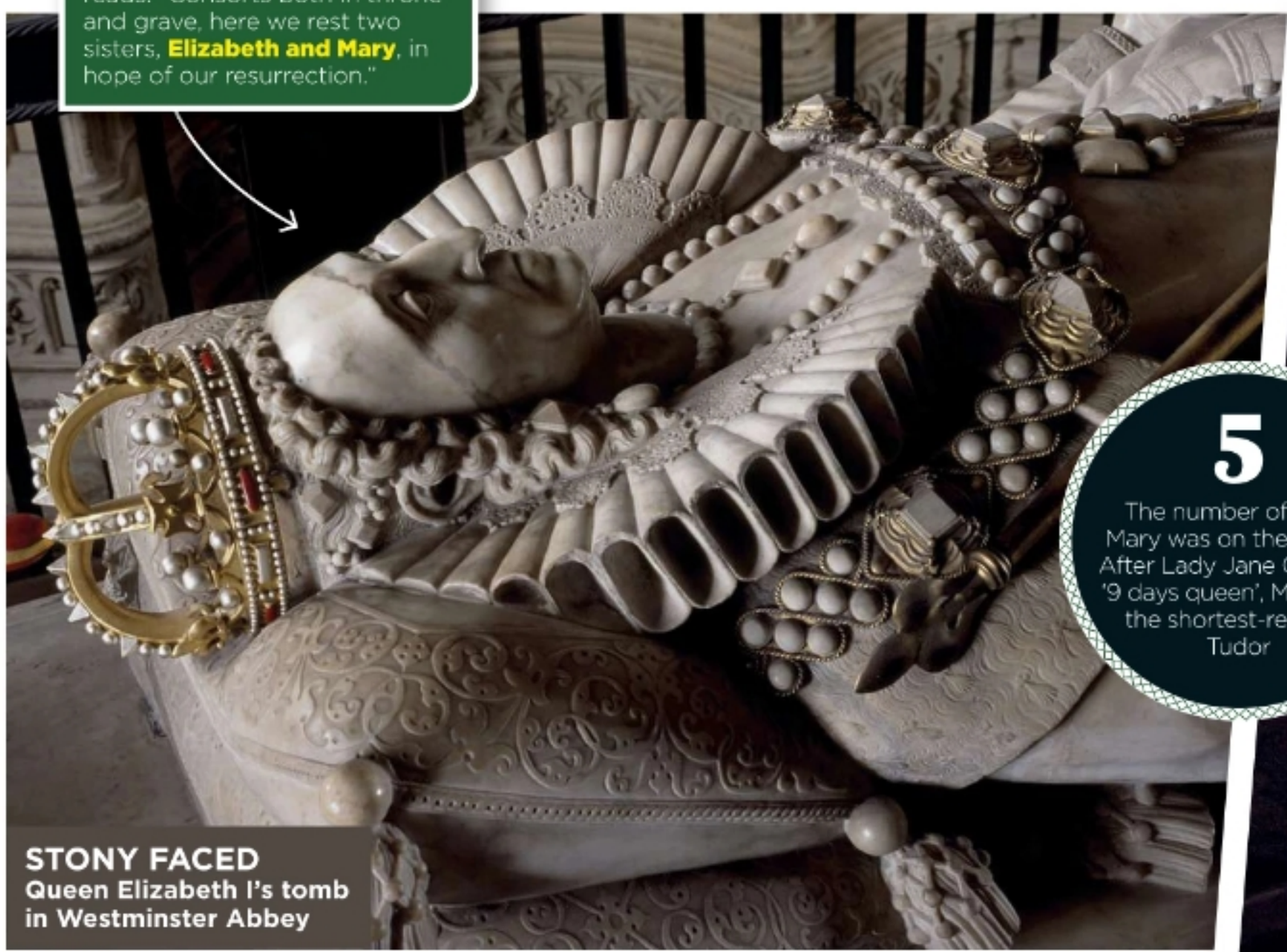
As soon as her coronation was out of the way, Mary made it clear that her first priority was to find a husband. Although her councillors assumed that she would consult them on such a weighty matter as marriage, Mary had already made up her mind. As with her faith, so her choice of husband was inspired by her mother's homeland. He was Philip of Spain, son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

Already inclined to favour Philip because of his Spanish blood, Mary fell madly in love with him upon first seeing his portrait. She refused to listen to the vociferous opposition from her council, who feared that England would become a mere satellite of the mighty Spanish Empire. Neither did she appreciate the strength of feeling among her xenophobic people, who were reluctant enough to accept a female ruler, let alone one who was married to a Spaniard. "The English... are most hostile by their nature to foreigners", remarked Savorgnano, the Venetian ambassador. When the marriage settlement was agreed in January 1554, it immediately sparked uprisings across much of the kingdom.

Upon meeting his English wife for the first time, Philip himself was a good deal less enamoured than she was of him and remarked that Mary was rather older than he had been led to expect (she was 11 years his senior). But this was a marriage of politics, not passion and the wedding went ahead on 25 July. The next day, Philip confided to an attendant that his new wife was "no good from the point of view of fleshly sensuality".

Philip spent much of their four year marriage abroad. True, he had pressing business to attend to, but it was clear that he found his wife repellant and took far more of an interest in her younger half-sister Elizabeth. When he heard of Mary's death in November 1558, he expressed only "reasonable regret". It was a poor reward for her unswerving devotion.

WHAT LIES BENEATH?
Elizabeth **was buried beside her half-sister** Mary. The tomb reads: "Consorts both in throne and grave, here we rest two sisters, **Elizabeth and Mary**, in hope of our resurrection."



STONY FACED
Queen Elizabeth I's tomb in Westminster Abbey

UN-MERRY MONARCH
Queen Mary I endured a life marked by tragedy and heartbreak

5
The number of years Mary was on the throne. After Lady Jane Grey, the '9 days queen', Mary was the shortest-reigning Tudor

loud, almost like a man's", which did little to enhance her appeal.

But the private Mary was very different from her unfortunate public persona. One of her favourite companions in her privy chamber was her female jester, Jane Cooper, known as 'Jane Fool'. Jane had been the jester of Henry VIII's last wife Katherine Parr and may also have served Anne Boleyn. In common with other 'fools' of the period, Jane probably had learning difficulties. Mary was extremely fond of her and treated her kindly, giving her many valuable clothes and shoes. Jane repaid her with loyalty and served her royal mistress for the remainder of her reign.

AVID GAMBLER

Another indication of Mary's lighter side was the fact that she was an avid gambler and loved to play cards and board games. It was a preoccupation that had developed in childhood, and it remained one of her chief sources of delight and recreation throughout her adult life. She also kept several pets, including a parrot and a spaniel, both of which had been given to her as gifts by members of the court.

Like her father, she was fond of masques and plays, and her abiding love of music provided much-needed relief from the concerns of state. She also loved to provide entertainments and feasts for her court. One Spanish visitor claimed that she spent more than 300,000 ducats a year on her table and that she and her court "drank more than would fill the Valladolid river".

"The 'intercessions for expectant mothers' page was stained with tears"

Mary deserves sympathy as a tragic queen, not just a bloody one. Her love for Philip of Spain was not reciprocated and he made little secret of the fact that he found her distasteful. But he did his duty because, just a few weeks into their marriage, Mary believed herself to be pregnant. Admittedly, she had many of the symptoms – her stomach had started to swell, she had ceased to menstruate and she was sick in the mornings. As tradition dictated, she entered her 'confinement', a month-long period of seclusion before a royal birth. Yet, after many weeks of waiting, she eventually had to admit defeat. It had been a phantom pregnancy. The humiliation of returning to public life with no heir to show for her long confinement must have been unbearable.

To make matters worse, the same thing happened two years later. This time, though, only Mary believed that she was really pregnant. Others whispered that the swelling of the Queen's stomach was due to a 'tympany', or tumour. This was almost certainly the case – Mary's mother had died of stomach cancer.

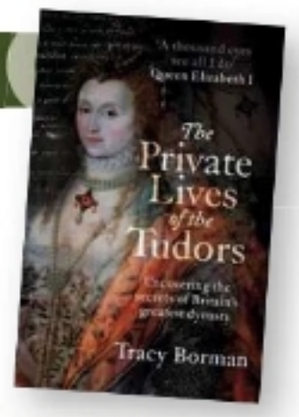
Early in the morning of 17 November 1558, having heard her final Mass, Mary slipped from a life that had been marked by tragedy and heartbreak. Among the personal effects that Mary left was a book of prayers, with a page devoted to intercessions for expectant mothers. It was stained with tears.

As everyone clamoured to welcome the new queen, Elizabeth, few seemed to care for the passing of the woman who has – unfairly – been remembered only as 'Bloody Mary'.

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X2

GET HOOKED

READ
Tracy Borman is an author and historian, specialising in the Tudor period. Her latest book is *The Private Lives of the Tudors* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2016).



WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Is it unfair that Henry VIII's eldest daughter is remembered as 'Bloody Mary'?
email: editor@historyrevealed.com

TO HIS DEATH
This 19th-century painting shows Charles I walking from St James's Palace to his place of execution, Whitehall

ROYAL CHAPLAIN
William Juxon, the Bishop of London, **accompanied Charles I** to the execution block. He was appointed **Archbishop of Canterbury** at the restoration of King Charles II.

KING'S GUARD
Colonel Matthew Tomlinson commanded the troops who accompanied the King to his **trial and execution**. The colonel always treated his royal captive with courtesy, and Charles gave him a **golden toothpick and case** as a memento.

CHARLES I
MARTYR KING

Julian Humphrys asks: how could England execute its King? The dramatic chain of events that lead to Charles's death includes secret plots, kidnap, treason and a bullet-proof hat...

ALAMY X1, GETTY X1

Charles I took his kingship seriously. A fervent believer in the divine right of the monarchy, he thought he was subject to no earthly authority. As he saw it, his right to rule came directly from on high, and so he was answerable to God alone. Yet when he was born in 1600, nobody had expected him to become King. His parents, James I and VI and Anne of Denmark, had an older son, Henry. However, when this first-born died in 1612, the young Charles found himself heir to the thrones of England (which at the time included Wales), Scotland and Ireland. He was thrown into a rigorous training regime to prepare for the crown. Charles was short, afflicted with a stutter and had weak ankles, possibly caused by rickets. Hardly the image of a powerful ruler. However, things soon turned around – he had always been an able student but, as he reached maturity, he also became a skilled horseman and marksman, conquering his disabilities with the same dogged determination that would later be his undoing.

Parliament and its forces may have defeated King Charles I in 1646, but they still had the problem of deciding what to do with him. At that time, few people would have considered the possibility of deposing their King, let alone executing him, so some form of agreement was called for. But Parliament was divided. The majority, known as Presbyterians, loosely allied with the Scots, favoured a negotiated settlement and the disbandment of the New Model Army. However, a significant minority, known as Independents, had links with the army and wanted to take a harder line. Even so, all of Charles's opponents accepted that while he had been wrong, he should still have at least some limited powers as King.

CHARLES BELIEVED HE WAS SUBJECT TO NO EARTHLY AUTHORITY AND WAS ANSWERABLE TO GOD ALONE

The monarch had ended the war as a prisoner of the Scots. They later handed him over to Parliament who kept him under house arrest at Holdenby House in the Midlands. The leaders of the New Model Army – who were worried they might be excluded from any deal made with the King by the Presbyterian majority – seized Charles I on 4 June 1647, eventually holding him at Hampton Court Palace. Charles lived there in comfort, saw his children and was visited by representatives of both Parliament and the army, neither of which had given up hope of reaching some form of compromise.

While these discussions were taking place at Hampton Court, meetings of a different sort were taking place downstream at Putney. Officers and men of the victorious New Model Army were debating the very basis of political society, including the agenda of the 'Levellers'. This was a movement that argued for, amongst other things, greater religious toleration, an extension of the franchise to allow more men to vote and curbs on the power of the monarchy. It was a sign of the times.

HEAD OF PROPOSALS

In November 1647, Charles escaped from Hampton Court and made his way to the Isle of Wight, where he hoped the island's governor, Colonel Robert Hammond, would

TIME FOR CHANGE
MAIN: **Commanders of the New Model Army try to negotiate with Charles**
RIGHT: **The report of a speech given by the radical William Everard**

NEW RADICALS
The Civil Wars unleashed a wave of forward-thinkers. William Everard's '**True Levellers**' called for the **common ownership of land** – a shocking idea at the time.

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X3

IN DEFENCE
MAIN: **Charles I runs rings around his accusers' flawed legal arguments during his trial in Westminster Hall.**
RIGHT: **The bullet-proof hat worn by the trial judge**

HARD HAT
Because of the risk of an **assassination attempt** during the controversial trial, the guards were on high alert. Lord President of teh Court John Bradshaw was given this **armoured hat** to wear.

help him. But the King and his advisers had misjudged Hammond, who refused to betray the Parliamentarian powers and Charles found himself a prisoner again, this time in Carisbrooke Castle. There, he continued to meet with representatives of Parliament and the army. That summer, the army leadership had presented Charles with a settlement plan called the 'Heads of the Proposals'. This would have allowed Charles to control the army and appoint his own advisers after ten years. It also permitted the survival of bishops and the prayer book for those who wanted it. In exchange it called for biennial Parliaments and freedom of worship for independent congregations outside the established church.

A more flexible king might have accepted these remarkably generous terms, but not Charles I. While talking with Parliament and the army, he had also been secretly negotiating with the representatives of his other subjects, the Scots. Together, they agreed a plan known as the 'Engagement'. In return for the temporary adoption of Presbyterianism in England, the Scots would invade the country and restore Charles I to power. The invasion would be supported by risings in both England and Ireland. The result was the Second Civil War. It was a worrying time for the English Parliament, but its forces were up to the job. They suppressed the Royalist risings, and defeated the Scots at Preston.

300
The number of sieges took place during the Civil Wars.

The second war led to a hardening of attitudes among the army and the Independents in Parliament. As they saw it, God had judged Parliament right, by handing them victory in the First Civil War. By causing a second conflict, Charles had defied God's judgement and had caused unnecessary bloodshed. Charles would have to pay for his actions, but how? The Independents did not command a majority in Parliament, where the Presbyterians were still in favour of negotiating with the King. On 6 December 1648, the New Model Army took action. In what became known as 'Pride's Purge', a force of soldiers under Colonel Thomas Pride took up position at the entrance to the House of Commons and waited for the MPs to arrive for the day's sitting. Pride arrested 45, who were deemed to be enemies of the army, and had them locked up in places across Westminster. More than 180 more were refused entry and wandered away, no doubt thinking that the army they had brought into being had become a far greater threat than the King had ever been. Others left in protest. Two-thirds of the Commons' membership had been purged and the remainder, barely 200 members, became known as the 'Rump' Parliament.

THE KING'S COURT

On 13 December, the Rump broke off negotiations with the King and brought him to Hurst Castle, a grim fortress perched on a shingle spit in the Solent, and then onto Windsor. Cromwell attempted to act as mediator, initially hoping Charles could be persuaded to abdicate. But it soon became clear that the King would never contemplate it and Cromwell joined those who sought the King's trial and, eventually, his execution. On 6 January 1649, the Rump established a High Court of Justice to try Charles I, and named 159 commissioners to serve on it. Over half of those named would never attend. The House of Lords refused to pass the bill establishing the Court and, needless to say, it never received the royal assent that was technically required. The Rump pressed on, regardless.

On 10 January, the highest-ranking judge they could find who was prepared to preside over the trial, an obscure Cheshire lawyer called John Bradshaw, was appointed Lord President of the Court – and given a bullet-proof hat for protection. On 19 January, the day before the trial, Charles was brought from Windsor to St James's Palace, where he would spend the last 11 nights of his life. The following day, dressed in black, carrying a cane and wearing the star

DEATH OF A KING

The most significant execution in British history

On 30 January 1649, after saying goodbye to his youngest children and putting on an extra shirt in case he shivered in the cold – which his enemies may mistake for trembling in fear – Charles stepped out onto a black-draped wooden scaffold outside the Banqueting House at Whitehall. Nobody had been able to find the usual execution block and so a lower one, usually used for dismembering traitors, was there in its place. Unable to address the crowd from a raised platform, he spoke to those around him, justifying his actions. He then laid his head upon the block, stretched out his arms to indicate he was ready and the unknown executioner cut off his head with a single blow. The watching crowd greeted the moment with a loud groan of dismay. Concerned that his grave might become a place of pilgrimage, the new regime had his body buried at Windsor inside the castle walls in St George's Chapel.

WHO DID THE DEED?
The man who cut off Charles's head **wore a hood** to hide his identity. Nobody is certain about who actually carried out the deed, although it may well have been London hangman Richard Brandon.

ALL THAT REMAINS
ABOVE LEFT: **The silk vest worn by Charles during his execution**
ABOVE RIGHT: **Today, a bust of Charles I looks down on the site of his beheading**
LEFT: **Charles I's death warrant. Cromwell's signature is third down in the left hand column**

GOD'S ENGLISHMAN
This statue of a pensive Oliver Cromwell stands outside the Houses of Parliament

of the Order of the Garter, he walked to face his judges in Westminster Hall.

The trial was not without its moments of drama. As the register of commissioners was read out and it came to the name of Thomas Fairfax, Commander-in-Chief of the army, a masked woman stood up in the public gallery. "He has more sense than to be here", she shouted. It was Fairfax's wife, Anne. After the proceedings were declared open, John Cook, the Solicitor General, introduced the charges against the King. He'd only just begun when Charles tried to interrupt him, tapping him on the shoulder with his cane and telling him to "hold". Cook ignored this and carried on with the indictment so Charles rose from the red velvet chair he was sitting in and, as he poked Cook again, the ornate silver end of his cane broke off and clattered onto the floor. There was a pause as Charles waited for someone to rush forward and pick it up for him. This would have happened in the past – but not now. Nobody moved and Charles bent down and picked it up himself.

59
The number of men who signed King Charles's death warrant in 1649

Andrew Broughton, one of the two Clerks of the Court, read the full indictment. It said that "out of a wicked design to erect and uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will," Charles had "traitorously and maliciously levied war against the present Parliament and the people therein represented". It then went on to list the battles at which Charles had been present together with the events of the Second Civil War. It concluded that because he had caused

ALAMY X3, GETTY X2

SHOCK AND HORROR
As the **axe fell** down on Charles I's neck, a **loud groan** went up from the crowd who had gathered to watch.

THE RISE OF OLIVER CROMWELL

The Civil Wars saw Cromwell climb the ladder of success

A hero to some, a monster to others, Oliver Cromwell remains one of the most controversial figures in the story of Britain. The Civil Wars are popularly seen as a struggle between Charles I and Cromwell. But it's worth noting that Cromwell, the man who was to become the most powerful figure in Britain, spent the first two-thirds of his life in relative obscurity. He'd been MP for Huntingdon in 1628 and, in 1640, he was elected MP for Cambridge. While he was a vocal opponent of Charles's policies in the months preceding the Civil Wars, he wasn't a leading one and it's significant that when Charles drew up a list of MPs to arrest in January 1642, Cromwell wasn't on it. The war made Cromwell. He proved to be a natural soldier and his military victories gained him rapid promotion and the ability to intervene on the national stage. They also gave him the inclination to make that intervention, for he saw in his victories a sign that he had been singled out by God.

Serving in Parliament's Eastern Association Army, Cromwell won a string of impressive victories, culminating in the Battle of Marston Moor, North Yorkshire, in July 1644, where he commanded part of the Parliamentarian cavalry. He became committed to the goal of imposing a settlement on the King through military victory, and he backed the establishment of the New Model Army. He again played a leading role at the crucial Battle of Naseby, Northamptonshire, in 1645, and was heavily involved in the mopping up operations that followed. In 1647, he saw off attempts by Parliament to limit the power of the army while also suppressing the more radical elements in it.

Until 1648, he believed that the King would be part of any political settlement. But, following the Second Civil War, his opinion swung in favour of deposing Charles, and putting him on trial.

In 1649, Cromwell ruthlessly crushed rebels in Ireland before returning, as Commander-in-Chief, to defeat a Scottish Royalist army at Dunbar on 3 September 1650. He repeated the performance at Worcester, exactly a year later.

HERO OR VILLAIN?
Erected in 1899, this statue of Oliver Cromwell, has long **divided public opinion**. In 2004, a motion was raised to have the statue removed and **melted down**, but it was not supported by MPs.

EXPERT VIEW

Julian Humphrys, Development Officer of the Battlefields Trust

IT'S SEEN BY MANY AS A CONFLICT WITH TWO DISTINCT SIDES

What is it that's still so fascinating about the British Civil Wars?
While it was a period that had a major effect upon the development of the constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy of today, I think that ultimately it strikes a chord because it's seen by many as a conflict with two distinct 'sides'. The image of gaily dressed and undisciplined Cavaliers fighting organised Roundheads in sombre uniforms may be misleading, but it's a powerful one, and one that still endures.

Was Parliament's victory inevitable?
Parliament certainly enjoyed a number of significant advantages, not least that it controlled the most prosperous parts of the country. But it still had to deploy those advantages, and in doing so it ended up tearing itself apart. The taxation it introduced was higher than anything under Charles, while the army it created ended up being as great a threat to Parliament's liberties as the King had ever been.

What was the turning point of the Civil Wars?
The Battle of Naseby, in 1645. The Royalists had been on the back foot for a year previously, but they were still a potent threat. The longer the King remained unbeaten, the greater his chance of obtaining a favourable settlement. Parliament's victory at Naseby was no foregone conclusion, but it destroyed the King's main field army and, militarily, he never recovered.

Would you have been a Roundhead or Cavalier?
Like many people at the time, I would have tried to keep out of the whole affair! However, if pressed, based on a number of factors including my ancestry and education, I guess I would have ended up with Parliament.

the wars, he was guilty of all the "treasons, murders, rapines, burnings, spoils, desolations, damages and mischiefs" committed in them.

What happened next has been described as Charles's finest hour. When given the opportunity to speak he refused to enter a plea, demanding instead, with no trace of his stutter, to know by what authority they sought to try their lawful King. He maintained that the House of Commons on its own could not try anybody, or have the authority to establish a court. He argued that the injustice he was suffering was what all his subjects would suffer at the hands of what he dismissively called this "fraction of a Parliament".

Charles appeared before the court four times in all, and each time he challenged its authority and refused to enter a plea. The Rump and the army's desire for an open trial that vindicated their actions had backfired badly. When Charles repeatedly demanded the right to a trial by a properly constituted court acting on the basis of established law, they simply had no answer.

CHARLES DEMANDED THE RIGHT TO A TRIAL BY A PROPER COURT

Nevertheless the show had to go on, and the court proceeded as if the King had pleaded guilty (this was standard legal practice in the event of a refusal to plead).

Witnesses were heard, though Charles was not present to hear or question them, and on 27 January the judgement was reached that "Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy to the good people of this nation shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body". The Commissioners who were present rose to their feet to show their agreement with the sentences and over the next two days, 59 of them signed Charles's death warrant. Cromwell was third to sign, and he is said to have relieved the tension by flicking ink at Henry Marten, one of his fellow judges. On 30 January 1649, King Charles I was beheaded outside the Banqueting House on Whitehall. In March, the Rump passed Acts abolishing the monarchy and the House of Lords. England was now a Republic.

END OF AN ERA
MAIN: **The exiled Charles II was restored in 1660**
BELOW: **Cromwell's death mask**

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

When was the monarchy restored, and why?

The abolition of the monarchy left the new Republic riddled with problems. Its leaders faced conflicting aims, notably "healing and settling" the nation, maintaining the support of the army, and bringing about "godly reformation". The Rump made little progress with any of these and, in 1653, Cromwell dissolved it by force. He replaced it with an assembly of "godly men", known as the 'Barebones' Parliament, after one of its more radical members. Indeed, the radicalism of the minority alarmed the majority, who surrendered their power within six months. Then, in December 1653, Cromwell accepted the army's 'Instrument of Government' – England's first written constitution. It called for triennial Parliaments and made Cromwell Lord Protector for life. In 1655, Cromwell introduced a direct military government. Major-Generals now supervised a tax levied on former Royalists, and also suppressed horse-racing, stage plays and similar 'heathen' activities. This didn't go down too well, and the nation's discontent grew.

In 1657, Cromwell became King in all but name. He died in 1658 and was succeeded by his son, Richard. Oliver had held the nation together by an iron will and sheer force of personality; his affable son was a very different character. As the country descended into chaos, Charles II was invited to return to England as King.

GETTY X2, NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE X1, MOVIE STILLS X1

GET HOOKED!

There are countless Civil War sites, books and films – here's our pick of the bunch...

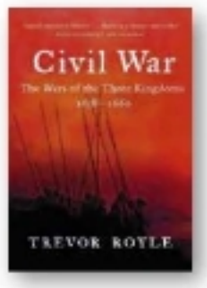
MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS

▲ **NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE, NEWARK**
There are well-presented exhibitions, boasting objects from both Royalists and Parliamentarians, and a trail through Newark, which played a key role in the wars. www.civilwarnewark.co.uk

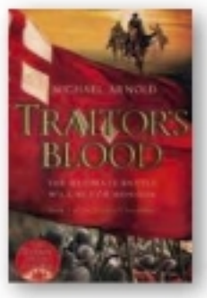
ALSO CHECK OUT

- Guided walks by the Battlefields Trust www.battlefieldstrust.com
- Old Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, site of a dramatic siege
- Banqueting House, Whitehall, where Charles I was executed

BOOKS



CIVIL WAR: THE WARS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS 1638-1660
by Trevor Royle
A overview of all three wars, including Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as England.



THE CIVIL WAR CHRONICLES
by Michael Arnold
This is gritty historical fiction, Civil Wars style. The series follows Captain Stryker from the Battle of Edgehill to who knows where!

ALSO CHECK OUT

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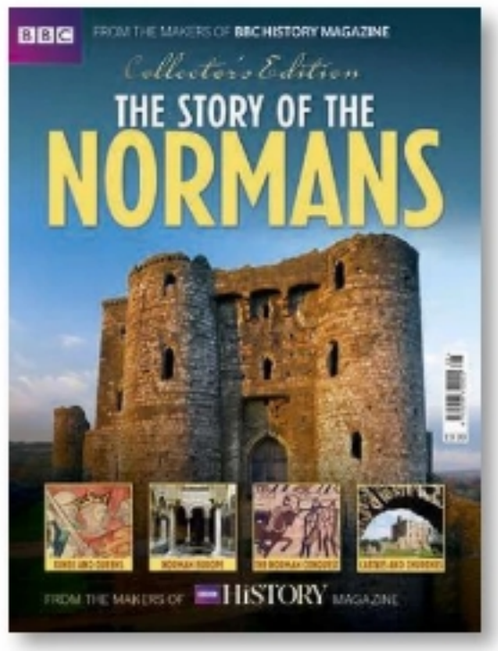

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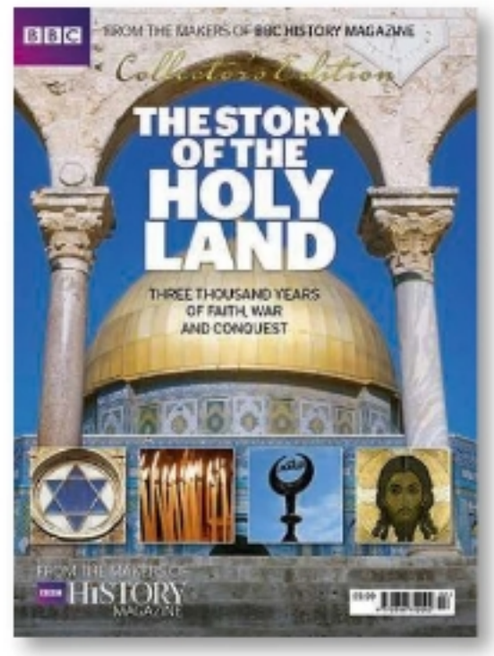

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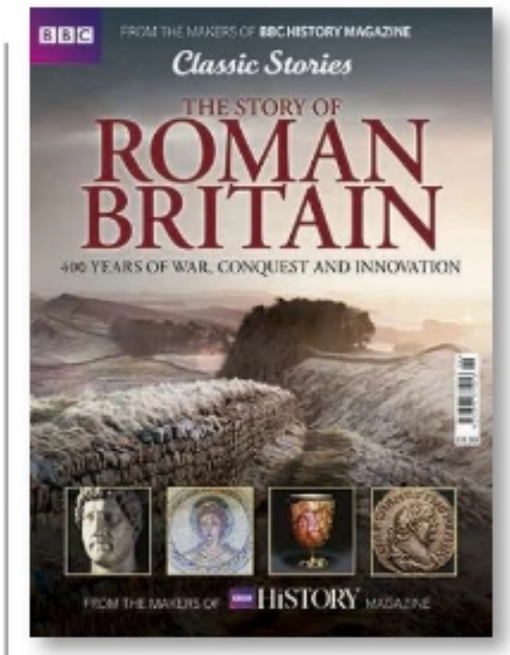

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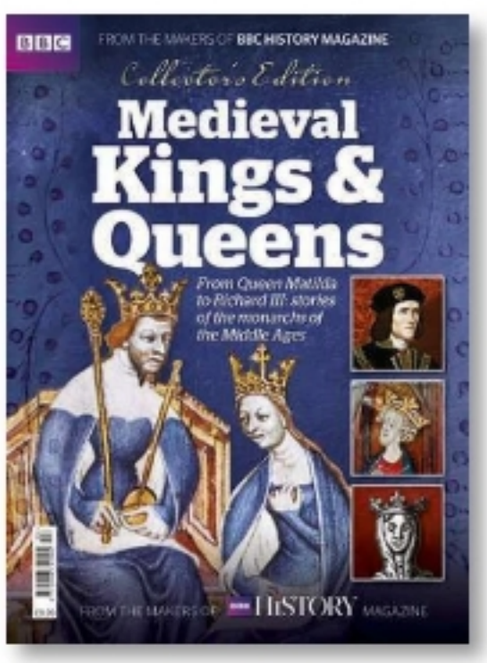

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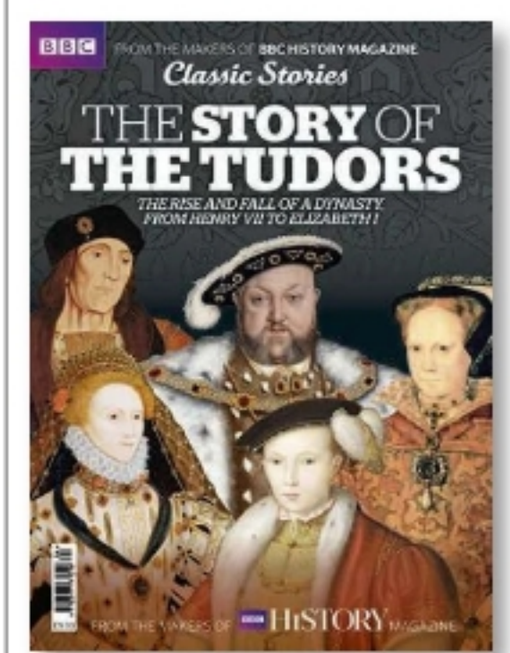

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VICTIM OF WAR
He would go on to become Britain's bawdiest king, but Charles II's life wasn't always easy-going

CHARLES II
THE MERRY MONARCH ON THE RUN

In the immediate aftermath of the British Civil Wars, the nation's most fun-loving king suffered his darkest days. **Julian Humphrys** explains how Charles II became a fugitive in his own land, and follows his desperate flight...

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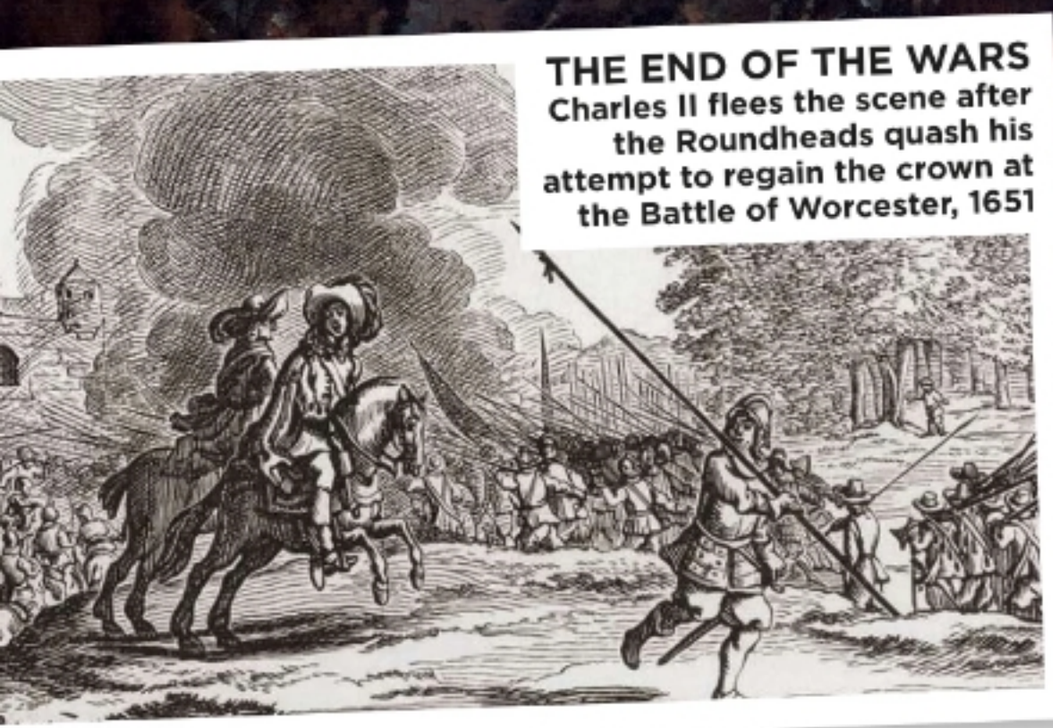
'ARBOURING A FUGITIVE
The King dozes off on a fellow escapee's shoulder while hiding from Parliamentarian troops in a tree



THE END OF THE WARS
Charles II flees the scene after the Roundheads quash his attempt to regain the crown at the Battle of Worcester, 1651

BRITISH CIVIL WARS NEED TO KNOW

WHAT In the mid-17th century, Britain found itself plunged into civil war. The nation saw the temporary abolition of the monarchy, as it went from kingdom to republic, and back again.

WHO The driving forces of the Civil Wars were the **Parliamentarians** (often called Roundheads) ultimately led by Oliver Cromwell, and the **Royalists** (or Cavaliers), led at first by Charles I and later, Charles II.

WHY The causes of the wars were numerous and complex, and included **religious divides** (Church of England v Presbyterians), **politics** (Charles I's style of rule angered many) and regional tensions.

WHEN There were three wars. The first, which saw Charles I defeated, ran from **1642-46**; the second lasted from **1648-49**; and the third began after Charles I's execution, raging from **1650-51**. It was after his defeat in the third war that Charles II had to flee England.

OUTCOME **Cromwell was named Lord Protector** in 1653 and he ruled England, Scotland and Ireland until his death in 1658, while Charles II lived in exile. When the King returned to claim the throne in 1660, it ushered a new age: the **Restoration Era** (*see page 89*).

ALAMY X1, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY/LONDON X1, GETTY X2

When Charles II fled Worcester after his defeat there in September 1651, his chances of avoiding capture were, on the face of it, not good. The entire Parliamentarian army was looking for him, while posters bearing his description offered a staggering £1,000 (at least £75,000 today) reward for his arrest. Being tall and swarthy, he would have had great difficulty in trying to blend into a crowd, and any attempt to disguise him as a servant would be hampered by the fact that his privileged background had given him little idea of how to carry out menial tasks. That he did manage to escape was largely down to the loyalty and courage of those he sought refuge with (many of whom were Catholic), his own cool-headedness and quick-thinking, as well as a large slice of luck.

Charles was born on 29 May 1630, the eldest surviving son of Charles I, and was 12 when the British Civil Wars began. Two years later, he was appointed nominal Royalist commander-in-chief in western England but, following Parliament's victory in 1646, he went into exile. First he stayed with his mother in Paris and later in the Netherlands where, in 1649, he learnt of his father's execution. Charles also learned that he had been proclaimed King of Scotland in Edinburgh – on one condition. At the time Scotland was Presbyterian, and Charles would have to commit to imposing the Scottish religion in England. Seeing it as his only chance to regain the crown, he agreed to the terms, sailed for Scotland and was crowned at Scone in January 1651.

On 31 July, he led a largely Scottish army into England. The invasion was a disaster. The Royalist uprising that Charles had been banking on never materialised and, on 3 September 1651, Cromwell caught up with him at Worcester. Charles's outnumbered forces were no match for the Roundheads and, despite a desperate charge led by the young King himself, they were defeated. Charles was now a fugitive, with a huge price on his head.

LONDON CALLING

As Cromwell's troops poured into Worcester, Charles rode out of St Martin's Gate and was soon fleeing north, accompanied by a number of officers who had survived the battle. Most wanted to make for Scotland, but Charles decided his best bet was to go to London.

At about 3am, with Charles Giffard, a local Catholic, and his servant Francis Yates (who was later executed for his part in helping the King) guiding them, the party headed for Boscobel. This was a house about 50 miles north of Worcester that belonged to the Giffard family. As it was surrounded by thick woods, it seemed an ideal place in which to hole up.

In the end, the party didn't go to Boscobel but stopped at White Ladies, another Giffard property a short walk away. As such a large group of fugitives would draw attention, Charles's followers rode on, leaving the King in the care of the Penderel family – the tenants at White Ladies. They helped cut Charles's hair, dirtied his face and supplied him with some plain clothes and a pair of ill-fitting shoes. Dressed as a woodman, Charles left the house and spent a cold, wet and hungry day in a nearby coppice. His only comfort was a dish of scrambled eggs brought by Elizabeth Yates, a sister-in-law of the Penderels.

Learning that the road to London had been barred, Charles decided to make for Wales, perhaps in the hope of escaping by ship from Swansea. The plan was to head for Madeley Hall, the home of Catholic Francis Woolf and, from there, cross the Severn River.

After dark, Richard Penderel took Charles to his house, Hobball Grange. They ate before setting off for Madeley on foot. It wasn't an easy journey. The King's borrowed shoes were causing him agony and at one stage he announced he could walk no further. It took all of Penderel's powers of tact and persuasion to keep him going. Despite a worrying moment when the pair were challenged by a miller, they eventually reached Madeley.

Woolf was initially unenthusiastic about hiding anybody – the area was teaming with Roundheads – but when he learned the identity of the fugitive he came around. He hid Charles in a hayloft and found him food, money and a new pair of shoes.

But the reports weren't good. All the crossings of the Severn were guarded and there was no way of getting to Wales. The decision was taken to return – on foot – to Boscobel, where one of Penderel's brothers was caretaker.

As they approached the house, Richard Penderel went ahead to check that the coast was clear. He returned with another Royalist officer, Colonel William Careless, who had taken refuge there after Worcester. The three went into the house where Joan Penderel gave them bread, cheese and small beer before bathing the King's blistered feet.

1,000
The sum, in pounds, offered for Charles II's capture

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON?

A TALE OF TWO KINGS

Charles II and his father could hardly have appeared more different. While Charles I was short, stuttering and Scottish, Charles II was tall ("above two yards high" according to his 1651 wanted poster), urbane and decidedly Mediterranean in looks – Britain's numerous 'Black Boy' pubs are named after him.

The two kings were also very different in character. Whereas Charles II enjoyed the company of numerous mistresses, Charles I appears to have remained completely faithful to his wife, Henrietta Maria. More importantly, whereas the younger Charles was witty and affable, the elder was shy, serious and a poor man-manager. Charles I seems to have been someone who tended either to go overboard in his affection for those he felt were loyal, or to form strong dislikes towards those he thought opposed his divine right to rule. Charles I refused to compromise, believing he had the right to do whatever was necessary to preserve his authority. That attitude would lead both to war and, ultimately, his execution.

Charles II, by stark contrast, was deeply cynical and utterly pragmatic, rarely prepared to risk everything on a point of principle. On return from exile he steered clear of mass reprisals and wooed his father's old opponents by giving them more power than his friends. He abandoned attempts to introduce religious toleration for Catholics and non-conformists when faced with Parliamentary opposition, and connived at the repression of both. He even kept his religious convictions to himself, waiting until he was on his deathbed before he converted to Catholicism.

He took subsidies from the French to reduce his reliance on Parliament, played his ministers off against each other and was quite prepared to let them take the blame for failures in policy. For example, he allowed his long-term loyal adviser, the Earl of Clarendon, to be exiled following defeat in the Dutch War of 1665-67.

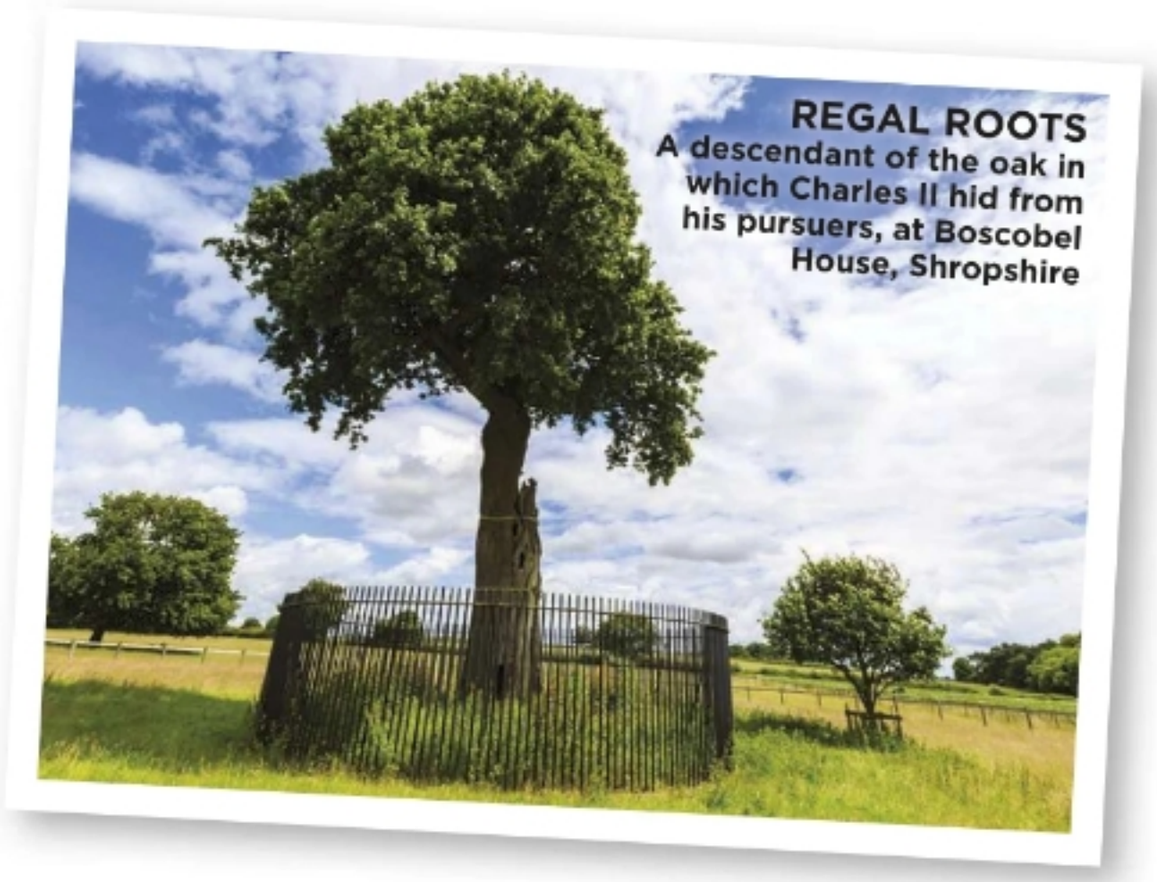
MASTER OF HIS OWN DEMISE
Sober, obstinate and introverted, many historians believe Charles I was responsible for his fate

THE ROYAL OAK

Knowing the house was likely to be searched, Careless suggested that he and the King hide in a nearby oak tree. They climbed a ladder into its branches where the thick leaves hid them from sight. A party of soldiers soon arrived to search the house and the woods. Charles had slept little over the previous three nights and he spent part of his time in the tree dozing with his head on Careless's arm.

The Roundheads eventually departed and, when darkness fell, the pair came down. After dining on mutton (rustled from a nearby farm), Charles spent an uncomfortable night in one of Boscobel's cramped priest holes.

Late in the evening on 7 September, Charles and Careless left Boscobel for Moseley Old Hall in Warwickshire, the home of another Catholic, Thomas Whitegreave. They were joined by the five Penderel brothers, one of whom



REGAL ROOTS
A descendant of the oak in which Charles II hid from his pursuers, at Boscobel House, Shropshire

THE KING'S HIDEY HOLE
The priest hole at Boscobel House, in which **Charles II hid** from the Roundheads.

SAFE HOUSES
L-R: **Boscobel House in Shropshire, today run by English Heritage; Moseley Old Hall, Warwickshire, now in the National Trust's care; the private home of Heale House, Wiltshire**

gave Charles an old mill horse to ride. It made painfully slow progress, causing Humphrey Penderel to quip that it was hardly surprising "For it had the weight of three kingdoms upon its back".

At Moseley, Charles was fed and given dry clothes, and this time the Whitgreave family's priest, Father John Huddleston, bathed his blistered feet. Charles spent the next two days at Moseley, sleeping in a bed for the first time since Worcester. But, on the afternoon of 9 September, danger arrived. A party of soldiers appeared, accusing Whitgreave of fighting for the King at Worcester. With Charles hiding in a priest hole, Whitgreave convinced his accusers that he'd taken no part in the battle. Eventually, they left.

"With the King hiding in a priest hole, the soldiers were convinced to leave"

WESTWARD BOUND

Just after midnight on 10 September, Charles headed to Bentley Hall near Walsall, the home of a Royalist colonel, John Lane. A few days earlier, Charles's friend and fellow fugitive Henry Wilmot had learned that Lane's sister, Jane, had obtained a permit from the military for herself and a servant to travel to Abbots Leigh, Somerset, to visit a pregnant friend. As Abbots Leigh is near the key port of Bristol, Wilmot saw this as a chance to flee. He planned to disguise himself as Jane's servant and then escape by sea. On learning that Charles had failed to reach Wales, he decided that the King should take his place.

When Charles reached Bentley and met Wilmot, he was given a new set of clothes and adopted the alias of William Jackson. A small travelling group then set out, with Charles riding the same horse as Jane Lane. Wilmot refused to wear a disguise and rode openly ahead of the party saying that if he was challenged he would claim to be out hunting. Whether this was a clever decoy or an act of foolish bravado is open to debate.

At Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, they found that Charles and Jane's horse had shed a shoe. Charles, playing the role of the servant, took the horse to a blacksmith. The King later told the diarist Samuel Pepys that, when he told the blacksmith that Charles Stuart deserved to be hanged for bringing in the Scots, the labourer replied that he spoke like an honest man!

They spent that night at a house in Long Marston in Warwickshire, where, in his role as a servant, Charles was put to work in the kitchen. He was told to wind the jack to roast meat in front of the fire. Predictably, the King had little idea what to do but, when the cook took him to task, he excused his clumsiness by claiming that his family were so poor they rarely ate meat.

WHITE KNIGHT
The daring noble Jane Lane, who aided the King's to escape

DUE SOUTH

Arriving at Abbots Leigh the following day, they were greeted with unwelcome news – there were no ships going to France for a month. Charles and Wilmot decided to make for the south coast, travelling to Trent, near Sherborne, to the home of another Royalist, Francis Wyndham. The King spent several days there while Wyndham and Wilmot looked for a boat to take him across the Channel. On one occasion, he heard the locals mistakenly celebrating his death.

On 22 September, Charles set out for Charmouth where a boat had been hired to take him to France. His party consisted of Wilmot, Wyndham and Wyndham's cousin Juliana Coningsby, with Charles again playing the role of a servant. Their cover story, should they be stopped, was that Wilmot and Juliana were eloping.

They duly arrived at Charmouth, but the promised vessel failed to materialise. Concerned that something had gone wrong, the royal party left Charmouth and

ALAMY X3, GETTY X5

THE TIMES THEY WERE A CHANGIN'

The return of the King led to a period of great change in London – though not all of it was intended. The Great Fire of 1666 destroyed over 13,000 houses and 87 churches. It took decades to rebuild the city. Although complexities of land ownership meant that the basic layout of the capital remained unchanged, the new buildings were very different to the old. Houses now had to be faced with brick not wood, and medieval churches were rebuilt in a new classical style, notably by Christopher Wren.

The Restoration also marked a departure from the Puritan repression of the Commonwealth. Back came maypoles, horse racing and the theatre – bawdy comedies being particularly popular. For the first time women, such as Nell Gwyn (*see page 91*), took to the stage. 'Breeches roles', where female curves were accentuated by tight-fitting breeches, were particularly popular with the largely male audience. Some plays, like Dryden's *The Rival Ladies*, went further and actually called upon the actresses to unbutton their doublets and reveal their breasts.

More seriously, London became an important centre for scientific enquiry. Men like Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke and Christopher Wren all made significant contributions in the field and, in November 1660, the Royal Society – a forum for scientific debate and experiment – was founded. Soon 'natural philosophy', as science was then called, became a fashionable pursuit for the middle classes and many people bought telescopes and microscopes to see for themselves what these scientists were describing.

Meanwhile, mathematician and physicist Isaac Newton was working away in Cambridge. In 1687, the Royal Society published his *Principia*. Describing the action of gravity, it's one of the most influential books of all time.

NEW LIFE
After the Great Fire, city planners rebuilt the city in grand, classical style. St Paul's Cathedral's iconic dome was just one of London's impressive new features

RESTORATION MAN
Physicist, mathematician, astronomer, alchemist and theologian, Sir Isaac Newton

INFERNO FINANCE
It took around 50 years to rebuild the city after the Great Fire, at a cost of some **£10 million** (nearly £1.5 billion in today's money).

LONDON'S BURNING
Fire tears through the capital for nearly five days in September 1666

POLITICS AND RELIGION

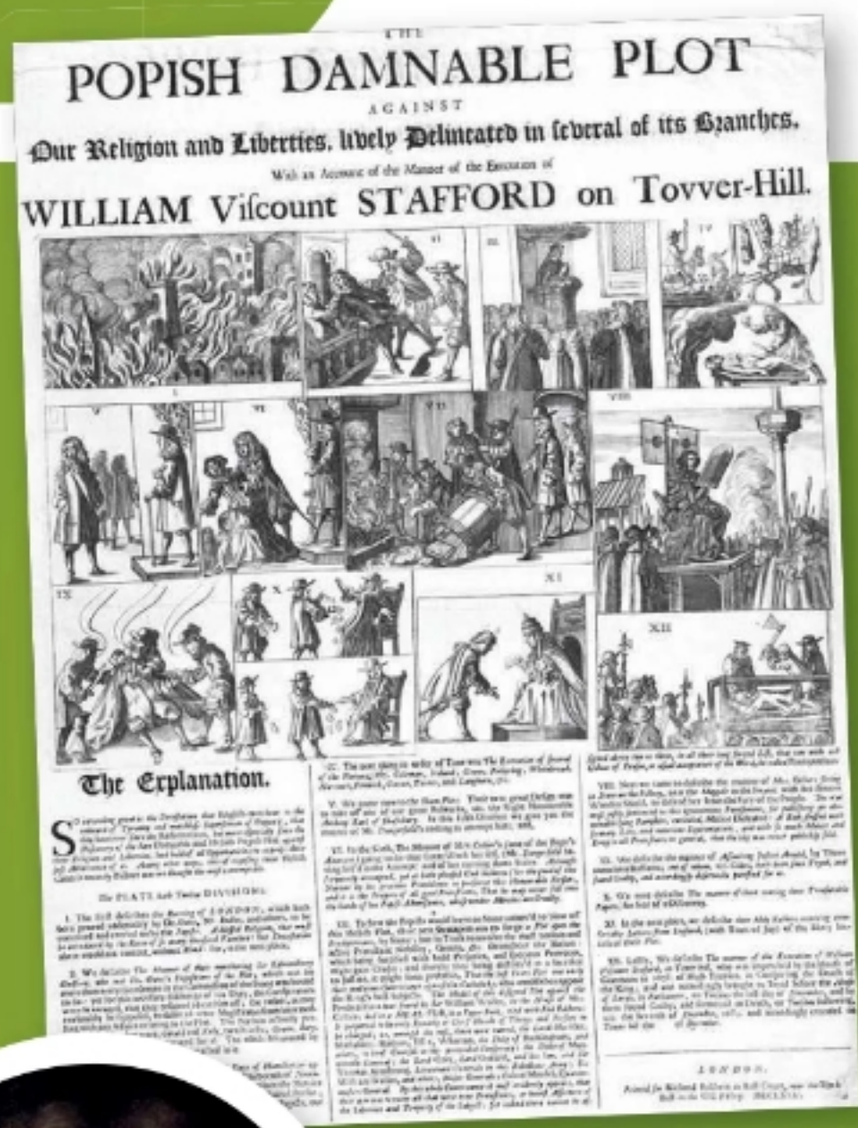
HEIR HEADACHES

Charles' wife, Catherine of Braganza, never bore the King a child. This meant that his brother James, a Catholic, was heir to the throne. Many of the royal court (including Catherine and some of Charles's mistresses) were also Catholics and, by the 1670s, concern grew that the monarchy was drifting towards Catholicism and arbitrary government.

Anti-Catholic feeling reached a crescendo at the end of the decade, with the 'Popish Plot' – a completely fabricated claim that there was a Catholic conspiracy to topple the government. It led to the executions of 35 innocent people before it was finally discredited. From 1679, Charles was faced by a concerted Parliamentary campaign to exclude James from the succession. It was the beginning of the split between Tories (supporters of the Church of England and the divine right of the monarchy to govern) and the Whigs (who favoured religious toleration – for Protestants who didn't conform to the established Church – and a less authoritarian monarchy).

Charles was prepared to compromise over many things, but not on the matter of succession. It took all of his political acumen to ride out the storm. Charles and his supporters unleashed a propaganda campaign attacking his Whig opponents. He tried to convince his subjects that the Whigs wanted another civil war, and that they posed a greater threat to liberty than James. He made the most of the fact that those who wanted to exclude James could not agree who to replace him with. He also secured financial support from France so that he was no longer dependant on his Parliaments for money.

In 1681, he dissolved his last Parliament (which he cleverly held in traditionally Royalist Oxford) and ruled alone, ushering in a far-from merry period where religious non-conformists, especially Quakers, were brutally repressed, both in England and Scotland.


THE POPISH DAMNABLE PLOT
AGAINST
Our Religion and Liberties, lively Delineated in several of its Branches.
WILLIAM Viscount STAFFORD on Tovver-Hill.
The Explanation.

RELIGIOUS CLASH
ABOVE: **Viscount Stafford was one of many innocent people executed because of the fictitious 'Popish Plot'** LEFT: **Charles II's controversial heir, the Catholic James II (reigned 1685-88)**

headed east to Bridport. The town was crawling with soldiers, gathering for an assault on Royalist Jersey.

Charles brazened it out, pushing his way through the troops outside the town's best inn. The King even convinced a worker at the inn, who was sure he recognised him, that they had once met when he was a servant in Exeter.

The next morning they set off back to Trent. It was not a moment too soon. Suspicions had been raised in both Charmouth and Bridport, and a troop of Roundheads missed them by minutes.

Charles and his party spent the night in an inn at the village of Broadwindsor but, no sooner had the they gone upstairs, than a detachment of soldiers turned up and demanded accommodation. The party was trapped on the top floor. Fortunately, a camp follower went into labour – this caused a major row with the village authorities who were worried that the child would be left in their care as a pauper. As a result, the distracted soldiers left the inn at dawn, without ever wondering who had been upstairs.

On the evening of 24 September, the King returned to Trent. Charles and Wilmot were finally able to leave Trent on 6 October and make their way, via Heale House (near Salisbury), Stonehenge and Hampshire to Sussex where a Captain Tettershall had been paid to take them on his coal boat from Shoreham to France. On 16 October, after having been on the run for six weeks, they landed at Fécamp in Normandy.

FRENCH LEAVE

Following his escape, Charles rejoined his mother in Paris. Surrounded by a group of quarrelsome advisers, who were unable to agree on what to do next,

ALAMY X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X2, GETTY X8

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Charles II had at least 15 mistresses and, although the country welcomed an end to the restrictive Puritanism of Cromwell's Commonwealth, the debauchery of his court soon drew unfavourable comment. Even diarist Samuel Pepys, who was decidedly no prude, noted the "swearing, drinking and whoring" that went on there.

Some complained about the cost (many of Charles's offspring were given substantial allowances), many believed it distracted the King from his duties, while others thought that disasters like the plague and the Great Fire of London (*see The Times They Were A Changin', page 89*) were a sign of God's disapproval.

THE QUEEN

CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA (1638-1705)

Married Charles in 1662. She had three miscarriages and bore no heirs. As a Catholic, she was in some danger during the anti-Catholic hysteria of the late 1670s (*see Heir Headaches, above*) but Charles protected her.

'THE BEAUTIFUL STRUMPET'

LUCY WALTER (1630-58)
MISTRESS 1648-49

Charles's lover while he was in exile, Walter was described as "brown, beautiful, bold but insipid". Their son, the Duke of Monmouth was considered, a potential heir by those who wanted to exclude Charles's brother from the throne.

'THE UNCROWNED QUEEN'

BARBARA PALMER, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE (1640-1709)

MISTRESS 1660-70

A great beauty and the King's favourite mistress in the 1660s. Hugely politically influential, she bore Charles five children and was created Duchess of Cleveland in 1670.

RETURN OF THE KING
A party atmosphere accompanies Charles as he rides back into Whitehall on his 30th birthday

"Charles landed at Dover on 25 May amid wild celebrations"

he spent a gloomy three years relying on the charity of the French government.

By 1654, Cromwell had begun negotiating an alliance with the French, so Charles and his entourage were obliged to leave Paris, eventually moving to Bruges. During Charles's exile, three serious attempts to incite Royalist uprisings took place in Britain: one in Scotland from 1653–54, one in the west country in 1655 and one in Cheshire in 1659. All were easily suppressed. It was only after Cromwell's death, in 1658, that the restoration of the monarchy became a possibility.

Cromwell's son Richard succeeded his father as Lord Protector, but he lacked his dad's abilities. A bitter power struggle arose between republicans and various army officers, as England was plunged once more into political turmoil. For the majority of the country, the only answer appeared to be the return of the monarchy – a view shared by General George Monck, who marched on London to provide the military muscle to make it happen.

On 8 May 1660, Charles was acknowledged King by the newly-elected Convention Parliament and invited to return home. He landed at Dover on 25 May amid wild celebrations and made a triumphal entry into London on 29 May. It was his 30th birthday.

Charles would often prove to be a callous and cynical ruler during his 25-year reign, but he never forgot those who had stood by him during his flight.

43
The number of days the King spent on the run

Many of his escape aides were given gifts and some of the families who helped him were awarded perpetual pensions. The descendants of Richard Penderel still receive theirs to this day.

GET HOOKED

VISIT
Boscobel House and the Royal Oak in Shropshire are in the care of English Heritage. The ruins of White Ladies Priory, another of Charles's hiding places, are a short walk away.

READ
Richard Ollard's *The Escape of Charles II: After the Battle of Worcester* (Robinson, 2002) is a lively account of Charles's six weeks on the run. For a brilliant snapshot of life in Restoration London, check out *Samuel Pepys: Plague, Fire, Revolution* (Thames and Hudson, 2015), the companion book to a National Maritime Museum exhibition.

'THE MOST IMPERTINENT SLUT'

Moll Davis (1651-1708)

MISTRESS 1667-1673

Actress in the Duke's Theatre Company. Davis bore the King a daughter, Mary, who married the Earl of Derwentwater. Pepys liked Davis's dancing; his wife was less impressed, describing her as "the most impertinent slut in the world".

'THE PROTESTANT WHORE'

ELEANOR 'NELL' GWYN (1651-87)

MISTRESS 1668-85

Actress at the King's Theatre. Charles loved her informality and she bore him two sons, both given titles. Referred to herself as "the protestant whore" to distinguish her from the Catholic de Keroualle (*right*).

'FUBS'

LOUISE DE KEROUALLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH (1649-1734)

MISTRESS 1671-85

A French aristocrat who informally represented Louis XIV's interests at court. Charles called her 'Fubs' (Chubby). She gave Charles a son, later made Duke of Richmond.

'THE ITALIAN WHORE'

HORTENSE MANCINI, DUCHESS OF MAZARIN (1646-99)

MISTRESS 1676-77

Mancini came to England in 1675 to escape an unhappy marriage. She briefly supplanted Louise de Keroualle as Charles's favourite mistress.

'THE ONE WHO SAID NO'

FRANCES STUART, DUCHESS OF RICHMOND (1647-1702)

MISTRESS – NEVER

Stuart caught Charles's eye when she became Maid of Honour to Queen Catherine, but she refused to become the King's mistress. She is best known as the model for Britannia on British coins.

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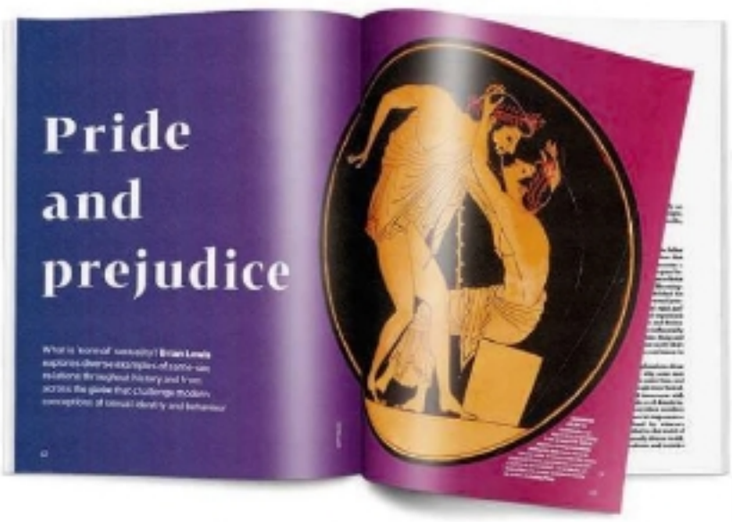

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DRAMA QUEEN
With her long list of personal tragedies, Anne's story wouldn't seem amiss on even the most dramatic of soap operas

ANNE
QUEEN OF BROKEN HEARTS

The last of the Stuarts is hardly England's most famous or successful queen, but she endured hardship and despair few could imagine, writes **Jonny Wilkes**

ALAMY X2

28 JULY 1683
ANNE DOWN THE AISLE

Despite rumours that she may marry George of Hanover – who would succeed her as George I – Anne is wed to Prince George of Denmark. In the course of their 25-year marriage, they remain committed and faithful to each other. None of Anne's 17 pregnancies with George results in a healthy child.

5 NOVEMBER 1688
WHAT A GLORIOUS DAY

William of Orange lands in England, having been invited by Protestant nobles to invade and replace King James II, Anne's father. She supports the Glorious Revolution and William's rule – shared with his wife Mary, Anne's sister – but when James finds out, he cries out, "God help me! Even my children have forsaken me!"

History has rarely been kind to Queen Anne. Here ruled a woman, it is judged, whose lack of intelligence and poor health made her, at best, dependent on ministers and close friends, or at worst, entirely manipulated by them. Anne lacked the political savvy to govern independently, leaving a tainted reputation where the last of the Stuarts is portrayed as weak, fat, plagued by gout and too fond of drink. Compared to names such as Elizabeth and Victoria, her place among the nation's female monarchs ranks pretty low down.

Yes, she was more observer than mastermind of the momentous episodes of her reign (1702–14), but Anne recognised that she lived in changing times. A revolution had ousted her father a decade earlier, and once queen, she faced a Europe at war and an untested, shifting political landscape at home. And in the midst of such turbulent times, one aspect of Anne's reign can be, if not overlooked, at least relegated to a less important status, even though it may be the most crucial explanation of her state of mind. In her life, Anne had 17 pregnancies, but didn't produce a single healthy child. The longest-living – William, her best hope – died aged 11, following a sickly life. Facing this constant stream of personal tragedies, is it any wonder that Anne let herself be carried by other people and events?

LOVE AND HEARTBREAK

The signs that Anne would face a life pulled in different directions began as a child. Although born, on 6 February 1665, to a Roman Catholic father, James, Duke of York, she and her elder sister Mary were raised Protestants at the behest of her uncle, King Charles II. Her early years also showed evidence of the chronic ill health from which Anne suffered her whole life, as she was sent to France as a toddler to receive medical treatment for an eye condition. Smallpox later prevented her from attending Mary's marriage to their Dutch cousin, William of Orange, in 1677. Losing her sister's companionship – as well as her mother, who died in 1671 – served to strengthen Anne's friendship with a young, pretty girl named Sarah Jennings, who would go on to play a leading role in her reign.

Anne's own political marriage came soon enough, in 1683, to Prince George of Denmark. It turned out to be a loving relationship, with both displaying unusual faithfulness for an arranged marriage. The handsome George, however, didn't impress everyone, as many found him uninteresting, unambitious and under the effects of alcohol too regularly. "I have tried him drunk and I've tried him sober, but there is nothing in him," remarked Anne's father. George himself admitted: "God send me a quiet life somewhere, for I shall not be long able to bear this perpetual motion." While their marriage appeared sincerely caring, Anne and George faced heartbreak with a stillborn daughter in 1684. Sadly, it was to be the first of many deaths.

The next year (on Anne's 20th birthday), her father ascended the throne as James II of England and VII of Scotland, following the death of Charles II. His wasn't a peaceful reign, as his Catholicism angered powerful Protestants and put his Parliament in direct opposition to him. This led a group of Protestant nobles to make an extreme move – they invited William of Orange to invade England and depose James. Anne, a deeply pious Protestant herself, became embroiled in the situation thanks to the influence of Sarah, now one of her ladies of the bedchamber, and her husband John Churchill. Anne was in a vulnerable state – in a matter of days in 1687, she miscarried and two of her children died – and the Churchills convinced her to support the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688. A regretful Anne later claimed her failed pregnancies were God's punishment for going against her father.

NO PAIN, NO REIGN

Not long after William and Mary seized the throne, Anne gave birth to a son who survived infancy, paving the way for a Protestant succession. Far from laying the foundations of a happy family dynasty, though, Anne and Mary had a bitter falling out. William had grown concerned about John Churchill's loyalty, so dismissed him from his military posts, which, in turn, led to Anne being commanded to end her relationship with her beloved, almost inseparable, Sarah. She refused, and the rift

ALEXANDER POPE, 18TH-CENTURY POET
"Here thou, great Anna! Whom three realms obey, Dost sometimes counsel take – and sometimes tea"

ALAMY X3, ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST © HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, 2017/ BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X1

23 APRIL 1702
CROWNING GLORY

On St George's Day, the increasingly infirm Anne is carried to the doors of Westminster Abbey in a sedan chair for her coronation. She is wearing crimson velvet, a golden robe and a petticoat of gold, silver and rows of diamonds. More diamonds adorn Anne's hair.

1701
THAT'S SETTLED

Following the death of Anne's only living child, a weak 11-year-old boy named William, the previous year, a succession crisis forces Parliament to make plans for a Protestant monarch on the throne. The Act of Settlement states that the crown would go to Sophia, Electress of Hanover, the granddaughter of King James I and VI.

"William's death proved Anne was destined to be mother of the nation, but not of a thriving, healthy royal family"

never healed, right up until Mary's death in 1694. The last time they saw each other came after another child of Anne's died, only minutes after being born – Mary, instead of comforting her sister, used the time to attack the Churchills. A reconciliation of sorts did take place between William, now ruling alone, and Anne, but he always kept her at a distance when it came to real power.

The best thing she could do for the monarchy was provide a male successor in the sickly William, Duke of Gloucester. That came crashing down in 1700 when he succumbed to his illnesses, just days after celebrating his 11th birthday with a banquet and fireworks display. As the British Crown was without a Protestant heir (and with plenty of Catholic claimants in the wings), Parliament passed the Act of Settlement, naming the House of Hanover as successors. And with the chances of another child all but diminished, Anne had to accept it.

A probable reason for the miscarriages and stillborn births was her deteriorating health, worsened by a sedentary lifestyle and excessive drinking. It's not surprising if this created a vicious downward spiral – so the more children she lost, the more she sank into despair; the more despairing she got, the worse her physical condition; the worse her condition became, the more children she lost. William's death proved once and for all that Anne was destined to be mother of the nation, but not of a thriving, healthy royal family.

By the time of the King's death and her ascension in 1702, her gout often prevented her from walking. On her coronation, the 37-year-old Anne had to be carried to Westminster Abbey in an open sedan chair, with a low back so that the six yards of train could drag behind. Yet, despite the frailty and red face, she demonstrated a quiet reserve and managed to woo the crowd, playing on some of her people's dislike of her predecessor for being a foreigner. "As I know myself to be entirely English, I can very sincerely assure you there is not anything you can expect or desire of me, which I shall not be ready to do for the happiness and prosperity of England."

VESTED INTERESTS

Anne's 12-year reign has become defined by the War of Spanish Succession, when England established itself on the world stage – the 1707 Acts of Union, which united England and Scotland into a single kingdom of Great Britain; and a major development in domestic politics, regarding the two-party system of the Whigs and Tories. She relied on three prominent men to help govern – the restored John Churchill (Duke of Marlborough), Lord Treasurer Sidney Godolphin and Northern Secretary Robert Harley – as well as the counsel of Sarah. It was Sarah's husband, Marlborough,

CALL ME MRS MORLEY
SARAH & ANNE

Beautiful, intelligent, witty and strong-willed, Sarah Churchill (née Jennings) could be described as the opposite of the plainer, less intellectually gifted Queen Anne. Yet from their first meeting as children, the pair formed a tight bond, which made them almost inseparable at times. Such was Anne's affection for her that she suggested that they come up with alternative names for each other so that they could be more equal. Sarah, therefore, became 'Mrs Freeman', while the Queen would be referred to as 'Mrs Morley'.

Sarah's influence over Anne grew, making her one of the most powerful people in England – as well as furthering the position of her husband, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. For herself, she earned the title Keeper of the Privy Purse, Groom of the Stole and Mistress of the Robes.

Yet she was perhaps too headstrong to get away with it for long. When Anne started to tire of her constant pro-Whig mutterings and the heated disagreements between them, she turned to another woman, Abigail Masham. Sarah's jealousy led her to come to court with a poem, suggesting a lesbian relationship between the Queen and Masham, and in an argument at the steps of St Paul's Cathedral, she told Anne to be quiet – a humiliation for any monarch. By 1710, Anne had had enough. After a fractious final meeting, she stripped Sarah of her titles and dismissed both of the Marlboroughs from her service.

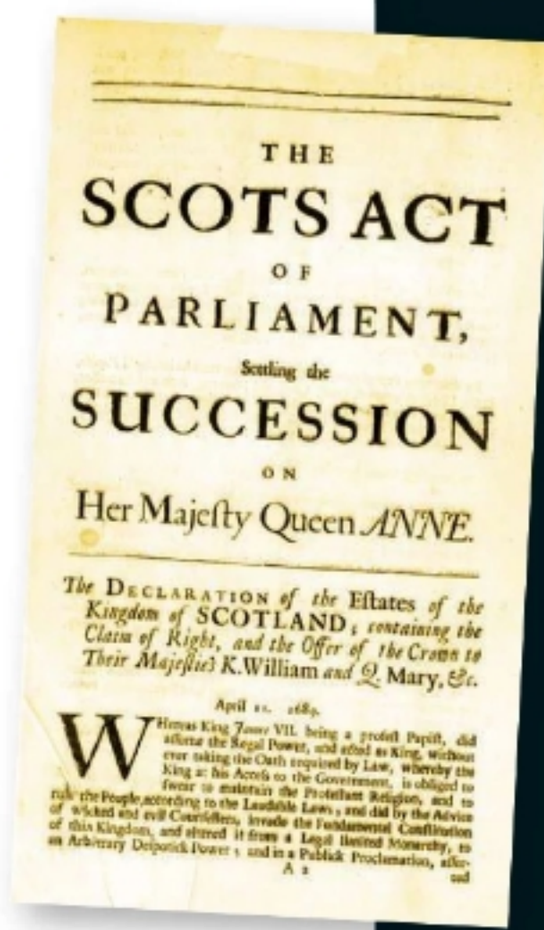
ROYAL BFF Sarah exerted great power in her friend Anne's court

13 AUGUST 1704
BRILLIANCE AT BLENHEIM

The first Duke of Marlborough – the husband of Anne's closest friend Sarah – routs a Franco-Bavarian force during the War of Spanish Succession. Anne learns of the victory at the Battle of Blenheim from a hastily scrawled note by Marlborough on the back of a bar tab, which reads: "I have not time to say more, but I beg you will give my duty to the Queen and let her know that her army has had a glorious victory."

1 MAY 1707
MAKE BRITAIN GREAT

Anne becomes the first monarch of Great Britain when the Acts of Union come into effect, bringing England and Scotland together. She had long been a keen supporter of the union, and attended a service of thanksgiving to mark the historic moment. One observer commented: "Nobody on this occasion appeared more sincerely devout and thankful than the Queen herself."



THE
SCOTS ACT
OF
PARLIAMENT,
Settling the
SUCCESSION
ON
Her Majesty Queen ANNE.

The DECLARATION of the Estates of the Kingdom of SCOTLAND; containing the Claim of Right, and the Offer of the Crown to Their Majesties K. William and Q. Mary, &c.

April 11. 1689.

WHereas King James VII. being a professt Papist, did assume the Regal Power, and acted as King, without ever taking the Oath required by Law, whereby the King at his Access to the Government, is obliged to swear to maintain the Protestant Religion, and to rule the People according to the Laudable Laws, and did by the Advice of wicked and evill Counsellors, invade the Fundamental Constitution of this Kingdom, and altered it from a Legall limited Monarchy, to an Arbitrary Despotick Power; and in a Publick Proclamation, after-

A 2 and

1 AUGUST 1714
END OF THE STUARTS

Having suffered a stroke on the anniversary of her son's death, Anne never fully recovers and dies peacefully at Kensington Palace. One of the last acts of her reign is to appoint Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, as Lord Treasurer – he makes sure that the succession goes smoothly, placing George I on the throne.

who Anne put in command of her armies for the war, which saw several European countries with vested interests fight over the disputed throne of Spain. A brilliant soldier, Marlborough achieved a string of victories, most notably at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704, followed by Ramillies two years later, Oudenarde in 1708, and Malplaquet the next year. The story goes that he sent word of Blenheim with a note, addressed to his wife, scribbled on the back of a bill from a tavern. A grateful queen made sure Marlborough was suitably rewarded with a plot of Oxfordshire land and a splendid palatial house, where the dukes of Marlborough reside to this day. The Marlboroughs were at the height of their power, but it wasn't to last.

The war went well for England, so it enjoyed a strong position for the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, ensuring that France accepted the Hanoverian succession and England kept hold of Gibraltar. But the conflict caused years of division among the competing political parties. Anne had hoped to govern with ministries mixed with both Tories and Whigs, free from party loyalty, yet her personal leaning always meant that the pro-monarchy, pro-Anglican supremacy Tories dominated. In a world of parliamentary supremacy over the monarchy, Anne got involved, attending cabinet meetings and imposing her views. This was no small feat in a world made up of men, let alone when you took into account her countless physical restraints.

Still, the party system was growing, and both sides vied for power and for the Queen's ear. Marlborough's victories temporarily handed the Whigs the advantage – theirs had been the most vociferous support for a land war, while the Tories wanted the fighting done at sea – and Marlborough and Godolphin themselves turned towards the Whigs, to Harley's chagrin. As the war dragged on, however, the Whigs' inability to sue successfully for peace meant that the Tories resurged. Such partisan squabbling left its scars on Anne, and her last years would be miserable.

> **"Sleep was never more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her"**

LITTLE COMFORT

Not only did Anne struggle with being increasingly lame and obese, but she was left devastated by the death of her beloved George, aged 55, in 1708. At the time when she needed loved ones the most, she couldn't rely on them. Her relationship with Sarah had soured over politics, as she grew frustrated by her friend's pro-Whig stance and insistence that the Queen should appoint men against her wishes. Things only intensified with George's death, and they parted company. Anne found a new favourite in Harley's cousin Abigail Masham, signalling a shift in who held influence over the Queen. Unsurprisingly, the dismissals of Marlborough and Godolphin followed. All Anne knew had been shaken or removed, and there was little left on this Earth to comfort her.

At 7.30am on 1 August 1714, Anne passed away, worn out physically and mentally. One of her doctors wrote: "Sleep was never more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her." At the time of her death, Anne had grown so vast that she had to be placed in a square-shaped coffin, before being carried (once again) to Westminster Abbey and buried next to her faithful husband. The Stuart line ended, and George I became the first Hanoverian king.

The reign of Anne, it could be argued, fulfilled the promise that she made on her coronation. While a nation's happiness is a subjective matter, England certainly became more prosperous, with gains made in the war, the unification with Scotland and a flourishing in the arts, architecture and culture. Today, we still talk of Queen Anne furniture. Her unfair assessment as weak-willed and ignorant stems from the pen of the embittered Sarah. In her memoirs, she commented: "She certainly meant well and was not a fool, but nobody can maintain that she was wise, nor entertaining in conversations."

Anne lived at a time when monarchy gave way to parliamentary authority, but she wielded power when she could, appointed who she thought to be the right people, like any monarch before or after her, and provided the first female royal voice in a century, since Elizabeth, and the last for another century, when Victoria would be crowned. And she did it all facing debilitating illnesses and enduring more heartbreak than most could bear.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Was Queen Anne's reign a successful one?
Email: editor@historyrevealed.com

ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST © HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, 2017/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X2, GETTY X2

A WOMAN'S PLACE
Anne's reign was rife with political disagreement, and despite parliametary supremacy over the monarchy, Anne regularly attended cabinet meetings and resided over the House of Lords

ANNE'S ACHIEVEMENT

THE ACTS OF UNION

Since the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, England and Scotland had been ruled by the same monarch, beginning with James I (of England) and VI (of Scotland). Yet it took over a century and several attempts before the two countries were united into a single kingdom. So what was different in the first years of the 18th century?

Firstly, Anne proved an ardent advocate of union, announcing in her inaugural speech to Parliament that is was "very necessary". That need became greater when the Scottish passed a law in 1704, allowing them to ignore the Act of Settlement and name their own successor on the event of Anne's death. The English retort was the Alien Act, a draconian measure that threatened Scots living south of the border. Both sides had reason to stop the petty back-and-forth of increasingly extreme laws. In Scotland, they were still reeling from the 'Darien scheme', a disastrous attempt to establish a colony in modern-day Panama to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. They needed the economic security England could provide. The English, meanwhile, wanted to make the border safe from potential attacks from the French (in case any nostalgic Scots looked to reignite the 'Auld Alliance') and put an end to the succession crisis.

It took just three months in 1706 for the commissioners, appointed by Anne, to agree on a treaty, leading to the passage of the historic law by mid-1707. Not everyone was happy with Scotland coming under the yolk of England, however, as it meant there would only be one Parliament – in Westminster. The argument over Scottish independence still rages on today.

The Madness of King George

Tom Symmons examines the curious case of the monarch's mental illness, and provides a diagnosis of the hit film

During 1788, George III became seriously ill. Stricken at first with stomach pains and nausea, the King began to suffer bouts of mental confusion, and by the end of the year was incapacitated. In an attempt to cure his malady, a brutal regime of remedies and treatment was prescribed – but his condition, diagnosed as madness, triggered a Regency crisis that destabilised the country's economy and spread anxiety among his subjects.

This dramatic episode is the subject of the acclaimed 1994 film, *The Madness of King George*, based on Alan Bennett's stage play. It continued an enduring tradition of monarchy films that have explored the tensions between the private lives and public duties of British kings and queens.

At the time of his breakdown, the King was a popular monarch who was widely admired for his piety and strong family values. In 1761, the year after his succession to the throne, he married Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, with who he would have 15 children. Unusually for a British king, he kept no mistresses but was a man of simple, innocent pleasures. He ate very little meat and insisted on the health benefits of fresh air. The King's love of agriculture and the countryside earned him the affectionate nickname 'Farmer George' among his subjects.

The same things couldn't be said for his eldest son and heir apparent, the Prince of Wales, who was unpopular with the public. He led an extravagant lifestyle, and was frivolous with money and women. The Prince was heavily in debt and had risked disinheritance by secretly marrying the widowed Maria Fitzherbert – she was Catholic, which, by law, excluded him from succeeding to the throne. He was considered dissolute and lazy by his father, and their relationship was stormy and strained.

"I have known stranger things. I once saw a sheep with five legs."

MAIN: King George dashes around the castle in his nightgown during his illness
LEFT: George was only 22 when he became King of Great Britain and Ireland in 1760

THE ROYAL WEE

In autumn 1788, the mystery illness that had begun to afflict the King earlier that year worsened. He suffered severe stomach pain and cramps, his urine was discoloured and he became increasingly agitated and confused. He would rave for hours on end and, uncharacteristically, use obscene language. On one occasion in early November, the King, reportedly foaming at the mouth and with bloodshot eyes, physically attacked the Prince of Wales, attempting to smash his head against a wall.

Stories of his illness spread, causing worry among his subjects. One rumour, since proven false, claimed that the monarch had mistaken a tree for the King of Prussia. The uncertainty surrounding the future of the King's government – one that had hitherto presided over a healthy and stable economy – caused the stock market to fall sharply.

Meanwhile, a series of harsh and primitive 'remedies' were employed in attempts to cure the King. Poultices of Spanish fly (a poisonous chemical produced by blister beetles) and mustard were placed all over his body; the resulting painful blistering would, it was believed, purge him of 'evil humours'. Laudanum and quinine were among the medicines prescribed. All proved useless.

With the King incapacitated, the Prince took over the running of the royal household and appointed Dr Warren, a general practitioner, to examine his father. Unable to explain the King's illness, the doctor pronounced him insane and delivered the grim prognosis that his condition was incurable.

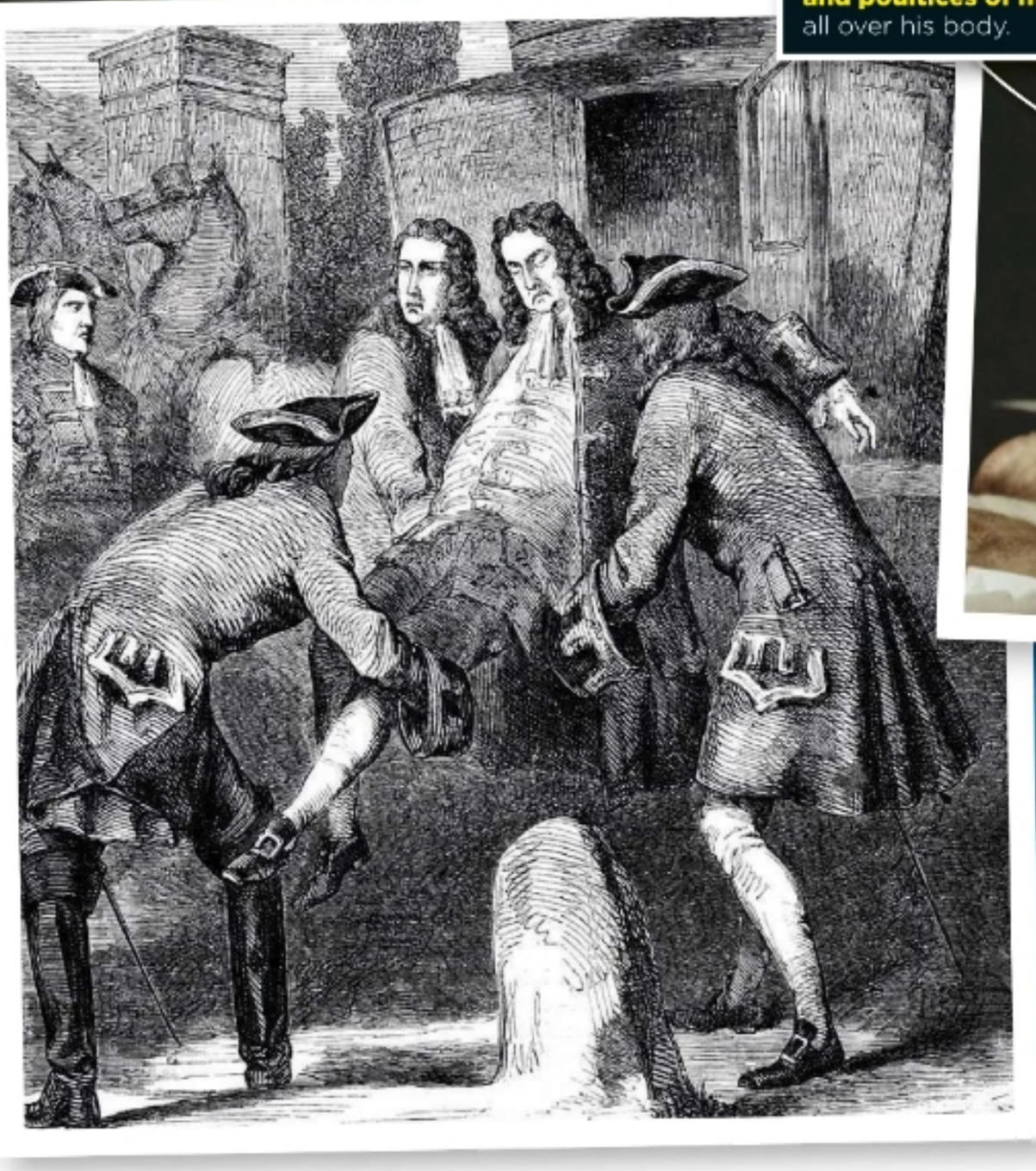
THE FACTS
Release date: 1994
Director: Nicholas Hytner
Cast: Nigel Hawthorne, Helen Mirren, Rupert Everett, Ian Holm, Amanda Donohoe, Rupert Graves

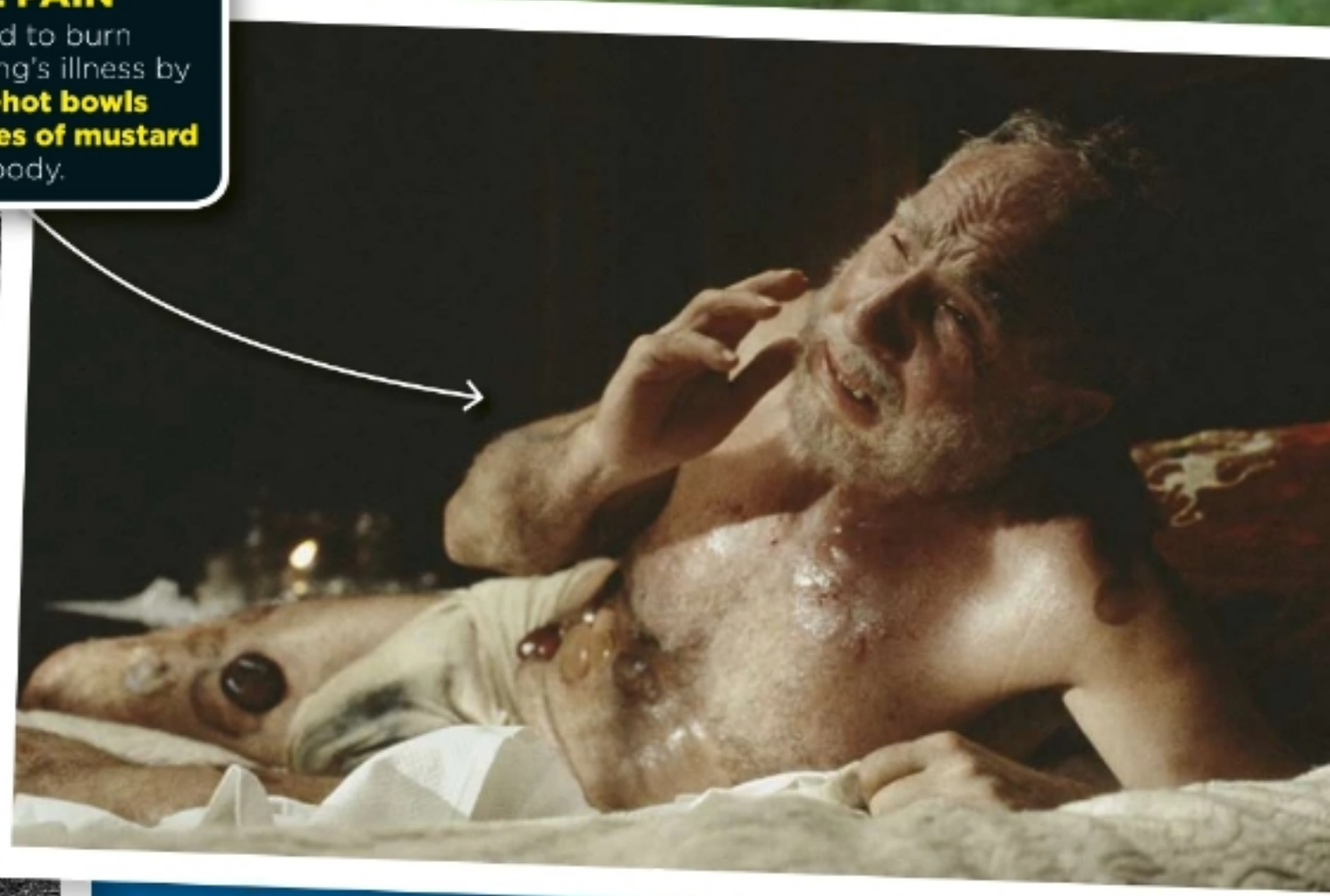
ALAMY X2, GETTY X2

RUNNING IN THE FAMILY
The King suffered several bouts of his illness – believed by some to have been the **genetic condition porphyria** – before it became permanent in 1810.

"This is a witty, poignant and accurate account of the Regency crisis."

A ROYAL PAIN
Doctors tried to burn away the King's illness by placing **red-hot bowls and poultices of mustard** all over his body.





"I've had no peace of mind since we lost America. Forests, old as the world itself. A paradise, lost."

ABOVE: The primitive 'treatments' in the film are accurate depictions of some of the 'remedies' employed by Dr Willis
LEFT: The King's illness included many different symptoms, including coloured urine and 'apoplectic fits'

TOUGH LOVE
The King was **gagged and restrained** in an iron chair for hours at a time during his treatment.

QUACK SHOT
George III's illness resolved itself and was **not cured by Dr Willis's brutal treatment**, as the film implies.

"I tell, I am not *told*. I am the *verb*, sir, not the *object*."

ABOVE: The King is force-fed while strapped in a chair. The film shows Dr Francis Willis treating George III with no more deference than any of his other patients
RIGHT: Willis was assisted in treating the King by his son, John, who also attended George when he became ill again in 1801

Unconvinced, Queen Charlotte insisted that specialist physician Dr Willis treat the King. An ex-minister, Willis ran his own private asylum and had experience treating the insane. Dismissing Warren's prognosis, Willis claimed that the King could be cured – on condition that the monarch agreed to the doctor's strict treatment system and, dispensing with royal deference, submit to his absolute authority.

This caused the King further loss of dignity and a great deal more suffering. He was denied permission to see his wife and daughters, and moved from Windsor to the relative privacy of Kew, where he was treated by Willis and his helpers. There, his wild outbursts and bizarre behaviour were curbed through restraint, often for hours, with a gag, straitjacket and purpose-made iron chair. Strong discipline, the doctor asserted, would restore the King's sanity.

PARLIAMENTARY CRISIS

While Dr Willis treated the King, during the winter of 1788-89, an epic parliamentary struggle ensued. With the monarch seriously ill and unable to carry out his royal duties, parliament's powers were severely limited and the future of the government remained in the balance.

The Regency Crisis was a struggle for power between the government and the opposition. Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger was supported by the King. His arch adversary, Charles James Fox, a leader of the opposition Whigs, was the friend and ally of the Prince of Wales, who was to be installed as regent. Given the severity of the King's condition, both Pitt and Fox agreed that a regency was needed but disagreed over the extent of the Regent's authority. If full powers were granted, Pitt feared his days in government would be numbered.

Insisting that the King was incurable, Fox pushed for full powers – royal prerogative – for the Prince, which would surely bring the Whigs into government after five years in opposition. Pitt, anxious to protect his position and in the hope the monarch would recover, employed stalling tactics. Eventually conceding that the Prince was the only reasonable candidate for Regent, the Prime Minister proposed limited royal powers that would give parliament control over the Regent and prevent him from dismissing the government.

Meanwhile, the King still ailed. Rival diagnoses were hurled between Doctors Willis and Warren, who were summoned to speak before a parliamentary committee, dragging the debate out even longer. Infighting broke out among the Whig opposition over the advocacy of royal prerogative, a position they had been attacking for years.

Then, as disunity within his party's ranks began to weaken Fox's position, the King began to show some signs of recovery. For periods, he was able to speak clearly and rationally, though some incidents – such as when he chased the second keeper of the robes, Fanny

RASCAL REGENT
The Prince of Wales (Rupert Everett) schemed to become regent

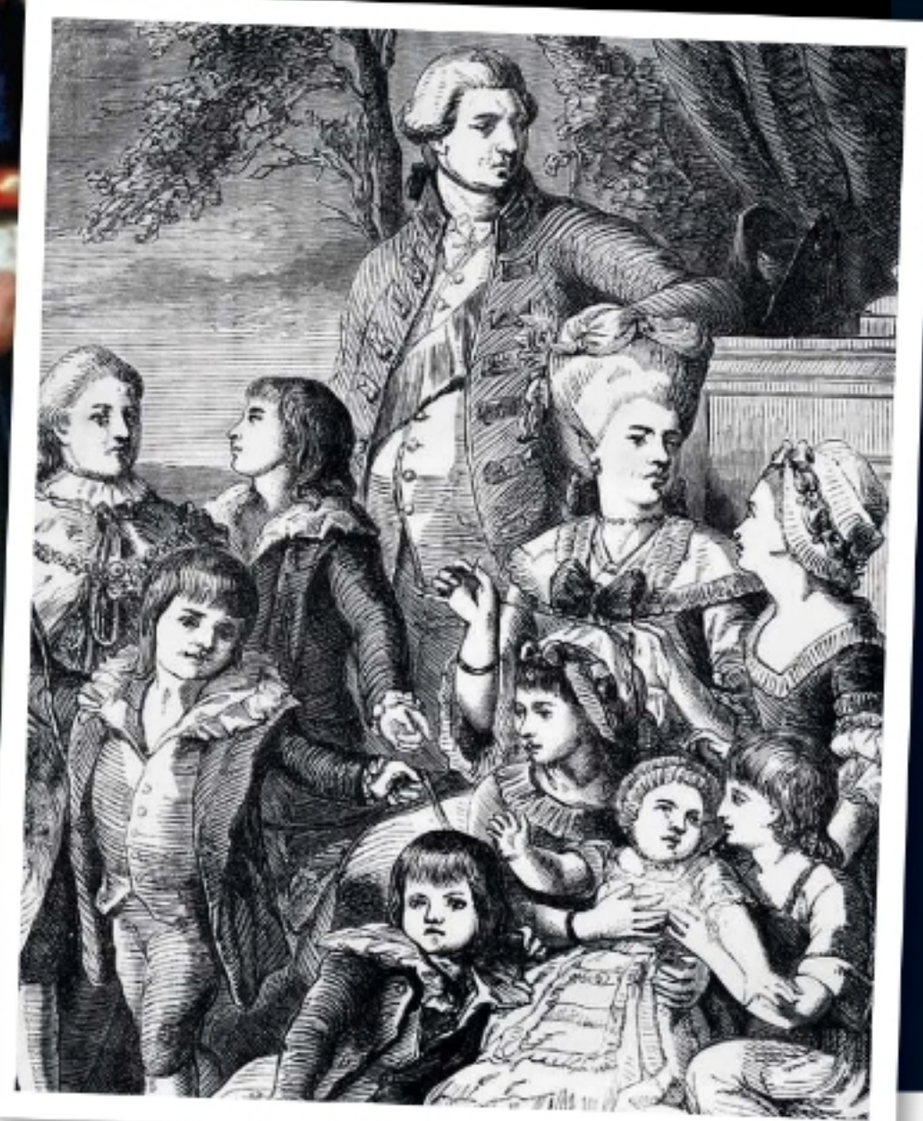
ALAMY X4, BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X1

"No life is without its regrets, yet none is without its consolations."

MAIN: King George III and Queen Charlotte (Helen Mirren) produced a big family – they had 15 children
BELOW: Though King George met his bride, Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, for the first time on their wedding day, theirs was a happy marriage

MIND OVER MATTER

Some historians now believe that the King's ailment was actually a **physiological rather than psychiatric** disorder.



Burney – showed that his condition remained unstable.

In February 1789, the Regency Bill was passed in the Commons, depriving the Prince of full powers, and was ready to go to the Lords. If it had been thrown out, Pitt's political future would again have been in jeopardy. But it never got there because by the end of the month, George III had made a full recovery.

The film is a witty, stylish, poignant and largely accurate account of the Regency crisis. In the feel-good tradition of mainstream filmmaking it ends on a triumphant note – George III's return to the throne – neglecting to complete the story for the viewer. The reality is that, just a few years later, the condition from which the King suffered in 1788 finally became permanent.

The long reign of George III came to an end in 1810 when he suffered a total relapse. The Prince was appointed Regent, and the King lived out the remaining ten years of his life at Windsor Castle in a pitiable state – confused, neglected and unkempt. In January 1820, he slipped into a coma from which he would not recover.

Some studies of the King's symptoms have suggested that he suffered from porphyria, a condition that causes skin rashes, stomach pain and mental disorientation. Coloured urine, as produced by the King, is a key symptom of this rare metabolic disorder. If porphyria was the cause of George's madness, it was probably triggered by the accumulation of arsenic in his body. There were extremely toxic levels of the chemical element in the monarch's wig and skin cream, as well as significant traces in medicine prescribed to remedy his condition – but which, instead, prolonged it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do films such as *The Madness of King George* tell us about our monarchy and government?

Email: **editor@historyrevealed.com**

Ones to watch: British monarchs

Mrs Brown
(John Madden, 1997)
Mourning the loss of her husband, Queen Victoria (Judi Dench) develops a close relationship with her servant (Billy Connolly).

Elizabeth
(Shekhar Kapur, 1998)
Cate Blanchett is imperious as Elizabeth I, ruthlessly suppressing threats to her rule as the 'Virgin Queen'.

The King's Speech
(Tom Hooper, 2010)
Unorthodox therapist Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush) helps King George VI (Colin Firth) overcome his speech impediment.

Judi Dench is by turns haughty and vulnerable as Victoria in *Mrs Brown*

WHO IS BRITAIN'S GREATEST QUEEN?

Elizabeth II may be Britain's longest-reigning monarch, but who is the greatest? **Lottie Goldfinch** looks at all the ladies who have worn the crown and considers their trials, tribulations and triumphs...

ALAMY X1, GETTY X4

"Today is the day I have reigned longer, by a day, than any English sovereign", wrote Queen Victoria in her journal on the momentous occasion on 23 September 1896. At the age of 77, the diminutive queen had overtaken George III – her grandfather spent a total of 21,644 days on the throne (that's 59 years, 96 days plus 13 extra leap-year days).

Despite Victoria's insistence that the record should not be celebrated publicly, her delighted subjects could not be silenced. "People of all kinds and ranks, from every part of the kingdom, sent congratulatory telegrams", she later wrote in her diary. These, she continued, "were all most loyally expressed and some very prettily..."

Victoria would go on to rule for a further five years until her death, on 22 January 1901. Her near 64-year reign held the record as Britain's longest comfortably for over a century, until 9 September 2015, when Victoria's great-great-grandaughter HM Queen Elizabeth II finally overtook her. Just like that day for Victoria in 1896, there were no official commemorations, but the achievement gave the people of Britain cause to celebrate.

Though the qualities that make for a strong monarch have changed with every era, each Queen has had her own difficulties and victories. Indeed, their extraordinary stories reveal several contenders for the crown of Britain's greatest female monarch...

BECOMING QUEEN

Born on 21 April 1926, the eldest daughter and first child of the Duke and Duchess of York, the then Princess Elizabeth spent her childhood never expecting to be crowned. Third in line to the throne, it was only on her uncle Edward VIII's abdication in 1936 and the accession of her father, George VI, that the she moved up the line of succession. On hearing the news, her younger sister Margaret said to the ten-year-old Elizabeth: "Does that mean you're going to be Queen? Poor you."

The current Queen, however, is not alone in her surprising rise to the throne. At her birth in 1819, Victoria was fifth in the line of succession after her father, Edward, and his three older brothers. Her father died shortly after she was born, and her uncles failed to provide living (legitimate) heirs, before two of them passed away, leaving Victoria to become heiress presumptive to her surviving uncle, William IV, in 1830, at the age of 11.

But it is Mary I and her half-sister Elizabeth I who are, perhaps, the most unexpected of Britain's female monarchs. Both women were stripped of their royal titles, removed from line of succession and declared illegitimate after their father, Henry VIII, ended his marriages to their respective mothers – Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. When their half-brother, Edward, was born in 1537, the throne must have looked even farther from sight. Even when the Third Act of Succession (1543) put Mary and Elizabeth back in the running, behind their younger brother, the idea of a woman ruling England was not popular.

The 20th century's Princess Elizabeth may not have had such a troubled route to the throne, but, like her predecessors, she was thrust into the public eye at an early age. In October 1940, at the age of 14, she made her first public

8
The number of bridesmaids at Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip's wedding in 1947

TOP LEFT: **Mary (left) and Elizabeth (right) are seen on the edges of this Tudor family portrait. At the time, neither were expected to take wear the crown** MAIN: **14-year-old Elizabeth (right) sits with her sister ahead of her 1940 radio address**

"Does that mean you're going to be Queen? Poor you."

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN
A NEW ERA

On 31 January 1952, Princess Elizabeth waved to the crowd that had gathered at London Airport (now Heathrow). There, she boarded a plane that would fly her to Kenya, for the first leg of a royal tour of the Commonwealth.

Among those waiting in the bitter cold was her father, George VI, seriously ill with lung cancer and unable to make the journey himself. The crowds below cheered their support as the ailing King stood on the roof of the building to wave his daughter goodbye. But as the 25-year-old Princess took her seat beside her new husband, Prince Philip, she was not to know that she had just seen her father for the last time.

The royal couple's first port of call, Kenya, had been a British colony since 1895, but, at the time, it was not the safest of destinations for the Princess. Violence had recently broken out between the anti-Colonial Mau Mau and the British Army. Nevertheless, three days after landing in Nairobi, Elizabeth and Philip found themselves at Treetops Hotel, Kenya's oldest safari lodge, built into the branches of a 300-year-old fig tree in Aberdare National Park. From the viewing platform of the multi-room treehouse, overlooking a waterhole, the pair watched baboons, rhinos, bushbuck, warthogs and elephants, all filmed by the Princess with her cine-camera. Later that night, while leopards prowled around the lodge after dark, the royal couple headed to bed, excited by what the following day would bring.

But the news that followed Elizabeth as she left Treetops the next morning, bound for the fishing lodge of Sagana, some 20 miles away, would change her life forever. While the pair had been watching African wildlife from their treetop paradise, George VI had died in his sleep, aged 56. Elizabeth was now Queen.

A coded telegram was dispatched to Government House in Nairobi, but it was a further four hours before the news reached Elizabeth, by which time the press had already been informed. At 2.45pm on 6 February, Prince Philip took his wife into the garden where he broke the news to her.

RULE VICTORIA
Queen Victoria receives news of her uncle's death, and of her accession

ALAMY X2, ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST © HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, 2017/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X1

British hunter Jim Corbett, who was staying with the royal party at the Treetops resort, wrote in the hotel's logbook: "For the first time in the history of the world, a young girl climbed into a tree one day a Princess and... climbed down from the tree next day a Queen – God bless her."

FAMILY TIME
The Windsors walk through Sandringham Estate, Norfolk, in 1943 – much of the land is used for crops to aid the war effort

FOND FAREWELLS
Elizabeth's family gathers on the airport roof to wave her off on the 1952 royal tour. PM Winston Churchill waits inside

GIRL POWER
THE QUEENS

EMPRESS MATILDA
(reigned 7 April – 1 November 1141)
Heir of Henry I, Matilda came within days of coronation during a civil war against her cousin, Stephen, who had usurped her. Her rule was short and, after years of conflict, she was forced to flee to Normandy and relinquish her claim.

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS
(r1542-67)
Queen of Scotland at just six days old, Mary refused to relinquish her claim to the English throne, to the irritation of her cousin, Elizabeth I. Mary's involvement in a plot to seize the crown led to her execution on the orders of the English Queen.

LADY JANE GREY
(r10-19 July 1553)
A descendant of Henry VII, Protestant Lady Jane was de facto Queen for nine days, in a bid to prevent Catholic Mary (below) from acceding. She was beheaded for treason in February 1554.

MARY I (r1553-58)
The only suriving child of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, Mary was the first Queen to rule England in her own right. She is remembered by many for her bloody persecution of English Protestants.

ELIZABETH I (r1558-1603)
The fifth and last monarch of the Tudor dynasty, Elizabeth's reign is often referred to as a Golden Age. Her rule saw England defeat the Spanish Armada and heralded an age of exploration.

MARY II (r1689-94)
Joint sovereign of England, Scotland, and Ireland with her Dutch husband, William III, Mary became monarch following the 'Glorious Revolution' an invasion that saw Mary and William depose her father, James II.

ANNE (r1702-14)
Last of the Stuart monarchs, and the first sovereign of Great Britain, Anne's reign saw the development of the two-party political system: Whigs and Tories.

VICTORIA (r1837-1901)
Formerly Britain's longest-reigning monarch, Victoria lead a vast empire. Her reign saw huge changes to British society.

ELIZABETH II (r1952 – present)
Queen at the age of 25, Elizabeth II is Britain's current Queen and the 40th monarch since William the Conqueror invaded in 1066.

SMILE AND WAVE
After Elizabeth's coronation, the Royal Family greets the crowd from the balcony at Buckingham Palace

FLYING THE FLAGS
Gladstone Terrace, Northampton, pulls out the stops for its coronation party on 2 June 1953. The residents win their own crown: the town's best decorated street

12
The number of British PMs who have taken office since the Queen's coronation. Tony Blair was the first born during her reign

speech during a live broadcast of the BBC's *Children's Hour*. Britain was at war with Germany, and it was the young heiress's job to send a verbal message of reassurance to the children of Britain and the Commonwealth, particularly those who were being evacuated. Three years later, she carried out her first solo public engagement and, from March 1944, began accompanying the King and Queen on many of their British tours.

But the Princess was able to live within the family unit throughout her childhood, unlike many other British queens. Previous royal tradition dictated that growing heirs be brought up away from their fathers – and sometimes their mothers – in their own household. The future Queen Anne, who acceded the throne in 1702, was sent to France as a young child, as was Mary, Queen of Scots – who became monarch at just six days old. Mary was sent to France at the age of five, following her betrothal to Francis, the boy heir to the French crown. She would not return to her homeland until she was widowed, aged 18.

ESTABLISHING RULE

News of George VI's passing, on 6 February 1952, reached Princess Elizabeth while she and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, were in Kenya, on the first leg of a Commonwealth tour. The new, grieving Queen flew home immediately, and was greeted at the airport by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Preparations began for her coronation, which took place on 2 June 1953, in Westminster Abbey.

For the first time in history the magnificence, splendour and mysteries that have traditionally accompanied the anointing of a new monarch were revealed to an awestruck public via the medium of television. More than 20 million people around the world crowded around television screens and radios to see and hear history in the making. True, the notion of Divine Right – that a monarch's right to rule is derived directly from the will of God – is no longer relevant, but the 1,000-year-old ceremony was followed according to the traditions of her forbears, right down to the measure of anointing oil used. The anointment itself was deemed to be absolutely sacrosanct and off limits to television cameras – a part of the ceremony that surely differed little from those that had gone before. Similar, too, must have been the cries of "God save the Queen" that rang out at street parties and celebratory toasts across Britain and the Commonwealth, an echo of coronations past.

BRIDGEMAN IMAGES X1, GETTY X3, PRESS ASSOCIATION X1

ENFANT HONOURABLE
Largely raised in France, in c1549 Mary, Queen of Scots, was drawn by French artist François Clouet

THE FIRST QUEEN OF BRITAIN
Anne, wearing her coronation robes, painted in 1702

THE VIRGIN QUEEN
BECOMING GLORIANA

When Princess Elizabeth was born to Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, on 7 September 1533 at Greenwich Palace, few – particularly her father – could have predicted her glittering future as Queen of England and Ireland and last monarch of the Tudor dynasty.

Her birth was, in fact, quite the disappointment. Having overturned the religion of England in order to annul his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon and marry the woman he adored, Henry had been utterly convinced that God would grant him a son.

But, as befitted a royal princess, Elizabeth received an excellent humanist education from some of the leading scholars of the day, which included languages, history, philosophy and mathematics. The disgrace and subsequent execution of her mother in 1536, however, meant that Elizabeth became a royal bastard – stripped of her title and removed from the line of succession.

When Elizabeth was just 13, her father died and, although she had been restored to the line of succession, the presence of a younger half-brother and an older half-sister meant Elizabeth was still a long way from the throne.

Aside from a barely-avoided romantic scandal with the new husband of her last step-mother, Catherine Parr, Elizabeth maintained the image of a sober, virginal Protestant lady throughout her teenage years. Impressed with her attitude, the equally devout Edward VI eventually permitted her to return to court, though she was removed from the line of succession once more.

After Edward's death, the Catholic Mary fought off the would-be usurper Lady Jane Grey to take the throne, and Elizabeth was again back in favour. But irreconcilable differences between the two sisters – mainly regarding faith – saw Elizabeth held prisoner in the Tower of London, after accusations that she was involved in a plot to seize the throne. It was only Mary's failure to conceive and the intercession of the Queen's husband, Philip II, that saw Elizabeth finally named Mary's heir. The crown would be hers.

"While Queen and country celebrated the coronation, the four-year-old Commonwealth, still in its infancy, looked under threat."

On her accession, Elizabeth II inherited a kingdom now at peace in the wake of World War II, but still in the grips of post-war rationing. Nevertheless, the mood in Britain was cautiously optimistic, hopeful that the new, youthful Queen would usher in a period of progress and calm after the upheaval of two devastating global conflicts.

FINDING ONE'S FEET

But elsewhere in the Commonwealth things were not looking so rosy. Back in Kenya, the militant African nationalist movement known as the Mau Mau had stepped up its violent activities to remove British rule and white European settlers from the country. Even while Queen and country were celebrating the coronation, British troops were trying to put an end to the atrocities being carried out against white settlers and Kikuyu tribes. Elsewhere in Africa, naval and military forces were heading to British Guiana to respond to revolutionary threats following the country's recent general elections. The four-year-old Commonwealth, still in its infancy, looked under threat.

Just over 70 years earlier, Queen Victoria, too, had faced military problems in Africa. In an age when colonial campaigns were seen as a natural part of British imperial expansion, the Boer Wars, the first of which began in 1880, saw the Boers of the Transvaal (descendants of Dutch settlers in what is now South Africa) revolt against the British annexation of 1877. The conflict dragged on intermittently until 1902.

Another Queen who found herself struggling to hold an empire together was Anne, who, five years after her accession, became the first sovereign of Great Britain, after England and Scotland were unified into a single kingdom. The prospect of unification, however, was not wholly popular with English people, many of whom felt Scotland had little to bring to the partnership.

Keeping subjects on side has clearly been key to a monarch's success throughout history, but Elizabeth II

2010
The year the Queen joined Facebook. Her page is called the British Monarchy, but you can't 'poke' the Royal Family on the social media site

GOLDEN GIRL
In Elizabeth I's coronation portrait, she is lavishly adorned with jewels and rich clothing, including a golden cloak

FAMILY REUNION
Victoria's relatives from across Europe gather for a family portrait

GRIEF STRICKEN
Queen Victoria in 1867, six years into her period of mourning for the loss of her husband

GRANDMOTHER OF EUROPE
VICTORIA'S LEGACY

When Queen Victoria died at the age of 81, after a 63-year reign, she left an astonishing legacy that continues to be felt across the world.

Keen to extend British influence and ensure the continuation of European stability, Victoria and Albert's nine children married into several continental monarchies: eight of their offspring would eventually rule Britain, Greece, Norway, Prussia, Romania, Russia, Spain and Sweden. Many of Victoria's 42 grandchildren, too, made strategic royal marriages that are still significant today. Both Elizabeth II and Prince Philip are great-great-grandchildren of the long-serving monarch. It is perhaps no wonder Victoria gained the sobriquet 'Grandmother of Europe'.

In 1821, the *Caledonian Mercury* wrote of the Empire, "On her dominions the sun never sets; before his evening rays leave the spires of Quebec [Canada], his morning beams have shone three hours on Port Jackson [Australia], and while sinking from the waters of Lake Superior [North America], his eye opens upon the Mouth of the Ganges [Bengal]." Indeed, the British Empire went through its largest expansion during Victoria's reign, ruling almost a quarter of the world's population. As its figurehead, Victoria oversaw the annexation of Hong Kong (1842), New Zealand (1840s) and the Fiji Islands (1874), as well as the creation of the Indian Empire in 1858.

Today, the rapid expansion of the Victorian Empire, with its connection to the slave trade and Opium Wars, is still debated. Many historians have condemned British colonisation as a lust and greed for power. But, although British imperial power had all but collapsed by the mid-sixties – mainly as a result of World War II – Victoria's legacy lives on through the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 53 independent countries, almost all of which were formerly under British rule. In 1980, Rhodesia, Britain's last African colony, became the independent nation of Zimbabwe while, for many, the handover of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China, in 1997, symbolised the end of the Empire.

As well as geographic expansion, the Victorian era is also remembered as an age of vast industrial and technological advancement. Steam power became a reality, electric street-lighting the norm and grand feats of engineering – from bridges to tunnels – transformed the land.

50,000
The number of people who attend the banquets, lunches, receptions, dinners and garden parties held at Buckingham Palace each year. That's a lot of vol-au-vents!

"Elizabeth I bucked the traditions of the Tudor period and refused to marry."

and her female predecessors have all seen their popularity wane over the duration of their reigns.

In 1861, following the death of her beloved Prince Albert, Queen Victoria began a prolonged period of mourning, and refused to appear in public for many years. Her subjects' sympathy for her loss soon began to fall away when Victoria showed no sign of returning to her role. Even the emergence of a republican movement failed to move her into action. It was only when Victoria's son, Bertie, became seriously ill and almost died that popularity for the monarchy increased again.

And Elizabeth II herself has been no stranger to anti-royalist feeling either, particularly following the death of her former daughter-in-law, Princess Diana, and with regards to royal finances. Yet, like the women who ruled before her, she has weathered the storms and largely avoided public alienation.

FAMILY MATTERS

Yet, while Elizabeth II – like many of her predecessors – faced many challenging situations, she has long been safe in the knowledge that she had fulfilled one royal duty of paramount importance throughout history: to provide an heir to the throne. The royal couple's first child, Prince Charles, was born in 1948, followed by his sister, Princess Anne, two years later. Charles himself made history at a young age, when he became the first child to witness his mother's coronation as

ALAMY X1, GETTY X2, PRESS ASSOCIATION X1

QUEEN OF CONTROL
Elizabeth I's portraits – including this one from c1583 – were designed to reinforce her virginal image and authority

ON PARADE
Elizabeth II delights the crowd in Leeds on her 2012 Diamond Jubilee tour

sovereign. Two more children – Andrew and Edward – followed in 1960 and 1964 respectively. With three sons, the line of succession was secure. Such a situation Henry VIII – whose desperate quest for a son involved tearing down and rebuilding England's religious structure – longed for his entire reign. Ultimately, though, it would be his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, who would become England's first reigning Queens, but neither would have children of their own.

Mary I married Prince Philip of Spain (later Philip II) in July 1554 when she was 37. Time was running out for her to provide the country with an heir. In September that year, it was reported that Mary was expecting a baby, but by July the following year, her abdomen had receded and it was clear that the pregnancy was, in fact, false. Blaming his wife for their lack of child, Philip left for Spain soon after and the question of the succession was thrown wide open once more.

Other queens, too, have struggled – or refused – to perform their 'royal duty'. Queen Anne had 18 pregnancies, of which seven resulted in miscarriage and five were still-births. A further five children did not survive past infancy, and Anne's one surviving son, William, died at the age of 11. Similarly, Mary II, who co-ruled with her husband, William III, suffered at least one miscarriage and the pair remained childless.

But Britain's most famous childless monarch was Elizabeth I, the 'Virgin Queen', who completely refused to marry. Despite parliamentary pleas and immense pressure to take a husband, Elizabeth bucked the traditions of the Tudor period and remained unmarried, creating instead an image of herself as the Virgin Queen who had devoted her life to her country. "I have already joined myself in marriage to a husband, namely the kingdom of England", she famously declared to Parliament in response to their concerns.

ROYAL LEGACY

When the Queen reaches the royal milestone in September, it will be for far more than her role as wife and mother that she will be remembered. Her reign has seen some remarkable changes to British society, some of which are reflected within her own family. Divorce, virtually unheard of during the Victorian era, is now commonplace – indeed, three of the Queen's own children (Charles, Anne and Andrew) have separated from their spouses. Homosexuality – once a criminal, even capital, offence – was decriminalised in 1967, with same-sex marriage legalised in 2014. In 1979, the Queen received Britain's first female Prime Minister – Margaret Thatcher – to Buckingham Palace while, in 1969, the death penalty was abolished in Britain.

One of the most radical changes of the Queen's reign, in terms of impact to the monarchy, came into effect in 2013. The Succession to the Crown Act now means that the eldest royal child, regardless of their gender, will accede the throne. The previous laws, introduced in the 17th century, dictated that a female could succeed only in the absence of living brothers or descendants of deceased brothers.

7
The number of extra-marital affairs that Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second queen, was accused of having

Throughout her reign and the many changes it has seen, both the Queen and the monarchy have been a constant source of stability for the nation. And the popularity of this age-old institution shows little sign of abating. Republican mutterings may emerge every now and then but, according to a 2013 poll by market-research company Ipsos Mori, over three-quarters of the population want Britain to remain a monarchy. Certainly when the record was broken in 2015, many Brits happily raised a toast to HM Queen Elizabeth II – a monarch it seems destined "long, to reign over us".

QUEENS WITHOUT THE CROWN
CONSORTS AND THEIR KINGS

BOUDICCA (died c60-61 AD)
Although neither a queen nor queen consort in the modern sense, Boudicca was married to the leader of the Iceni people of Eastern England. After her husband's death, she led a major uprising against occupying Roman forces, destroying London, Colchester and St Albans, but is thought to have poisoned herself to avoid capture.

ANNE BOLEYN (c1501-36)
Anne Boleyn's marriage to Henry VIII was the result of years of religious and political upheaval. So great was Henry's desire to marry Anne, he severed England from the Church of Rome – which had refused to annul his first marriage – and instead created a new Church of England, with himself at the head. The marriage lost Anne her head, but created one of England's most famous ruling queens – Elizabeth I.

CHARLOTTE SOPHIA (1714-1818)
Consort to George III, Charlotte may possibly have been Britain's first black queen. Historian Mario de Valdes y Cocom claims that as well as being of German descent, Charlotte also had African ancestry, something he feels is evident from portraits of the 18th-century Queen. Educated and a great patron of the arts, Charlotte was anti-slavery in an era when it was rife.

ALEXANDRA OF DENMARK (1844-1925)
Wife of Edward VII, Alexandra was a noted fashionista of her day and is credited with introducing the choker necklace and high necklines to British fashion. She is also believed to have suffered from a curvature of the spine, a disability she cleverly concealed through clothing adaptations.

GET HOOKED

BOOK
The Real Elizabeth: an Intimate Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, by Andrew Marr (Griffin, 2012)

ONLINE
Explore the history of the British monarchy for yourself at www.royal.gov.uk

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Who do you think was Britain's best Queen?
Email: editor@historyrevealed.com

The King's Speech

Mark Glancy explores the story behind the hit film, and reveals how the King who struggled to speak finally found his voice...

"The nation believes that when I speak, I speak for them. But I can't speak."

LEFT: With coaching from Logue, King George VI delivers a slow, but stutter-free radio address on the day Britain declares war
MAIN: George VI, as played by Colin Firth, prepares for the same broadcast. Logue stands on the other side of the microphone, talking the King through his speech

Films about the British monarchy have long centred on the most charismatic rulers and legendary moments of crisis or triumph during their reign. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I figure prominently in this tradition, and each has been portrayed by a string of fine actors. *The King's Speech*, by contrast, is remarkable for bringing to the screen one of Britain's least imposing monarchs, King George VI, and for dramatising the hitherto little-known problem of his stammer. It is even more remarkable for making this shy, awkward figure a sympathetic and compelling character, and for illuminating the transformation of the monarchy in the age of mass media.

THE FACTS
Director: Tom Hooper
Cast: Colin Firth Helena Bonham Carter, Geoffrey Rush, Guy Pearce, Michael Gambon, Claire Bloom, Timothy Spall

George VI was born in 1895 as Prince Albert, the second son of the future King George V and Queen Mary. He was known within the Royal family by the nickname 'Bertie', but everything else about his upbringing was stiff with the strict, unsentimental attitudes towards child rearing that prevailed in the Victorian era. He was left-handed but made to write with his right hand. He had 'knock knees' and was forced to wear uncomfortable metal braces on his legs. His stammer was regarded as an affliction that he should somehow rise above. "Get it out!", King George V would demand when he heard his son struggling to speak. That, of course, only made the condition worse.

SEALED LIPS

In childhood, the stammer was a private issue. It made the young Prince seem quiet, but had no wider significance. He was the second-in-line to the throne after his elder brother, the future Edward VIII. It was only with the rise of radio in the twenties that his stammer became public knowledge, and thus a problem.

By 1925, Albert had become the Duke of York, and he was required to give the closing speech at the British Empire Exhibition. This was delivered not only to the crowds gathered in the massive new Wembley Stadium,

ALAMY X2, GETTY X1, MOVIE STILLS X1

CURSING KING
Modern audiences may be amused to see Logue encouraging George VI to **loosen up by swearing** in the film, but this would have been considered outrageously vulgar at the time.

CHARACTER ACT
Colin Firth brilliantly conveys George VI's **anxiety and frustration**, but he is a far more forceful and assertive figure than the shy, diminutive King.

POLITICS OF WAR
The film suggests that in the thirties, the Royals were attuned to the **dangers posed by dictators**, but in fact they were strong supporters of appeasement until the outbreak of war.

"I intend to be a very great Queen... to a very great King"

ABOVE: The future King George VI and Queen Elizabeth leave for their honeymoon, in 1923
RIGHT: In the movie, as in real life, Elizabeth is a strong character and a great support to George VI

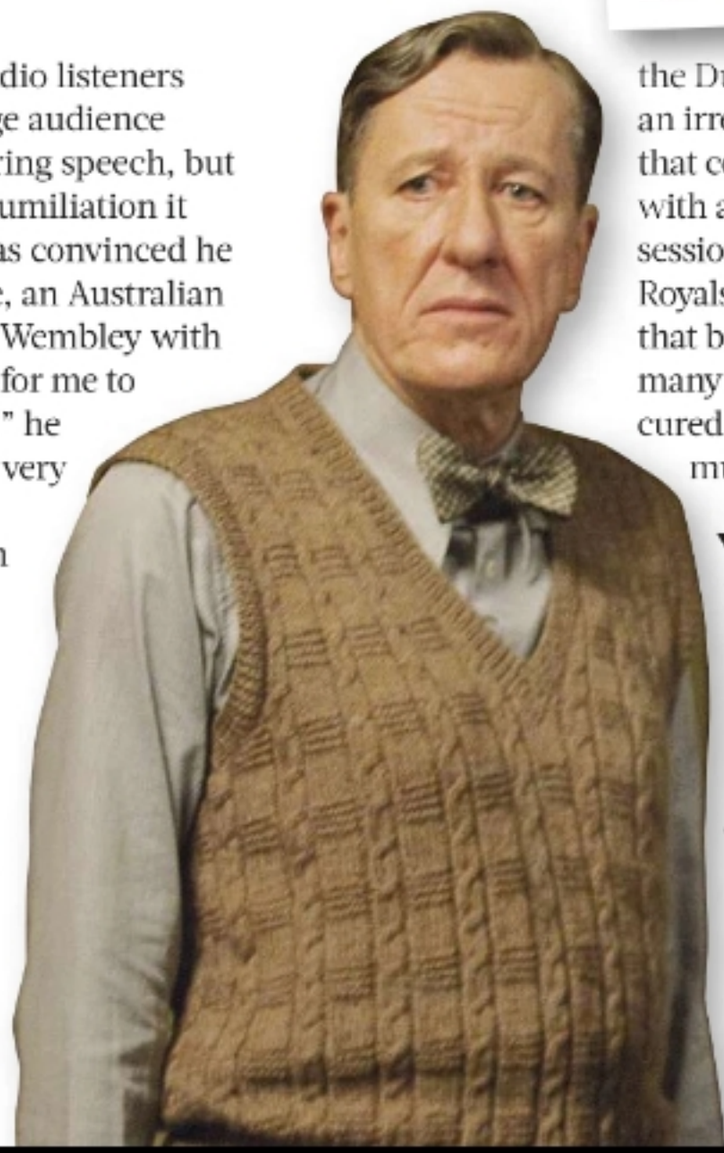
FROSTY FRIENDSHIP
The film presents Churchill as a **friend and confidante** of the Duke and Duchess of York, but in fact **they were at odds** with each other in the thirties. Their relationship only thawed later on, years into World War II.

"War with Germany will come. And we will need a King who we can all stand behind"

RIGHT: Winston Churchill celebrates victory with the monarchs on 8 May 1945, outside Buckingham Palace
MAIN: Cigar in hand, Timothy Spall epitomises Churchill

but also to millions of radio listeners around the world. A huge audience heard his slow and faltering speech, but few could imagine the humiliation it brought. One listener was convinced he could help. Lionel Logue, an Australian speech therapist, was at Wembley with his family. "He is too old for me to manage a complete cure," he told his son, "but I could very nearly do it."

Albert had seen speech therapists before, but to no avail. Logue focussed on relaxing his patient to reduce the anxiety that accompanied his stammer. He assigned daily exercises – tongue-twisters and breathing techniques – and urged the Duke to think of the stammer not as an irreparable flaw, but as a condition that could be overcome. His methods met with almost instant success. Their first session was in October 1926, and on the Royals' tour of Australia and New Zealand that began in early 1927, the Duke gave many well-received speeches. He was not cured, but his delivery and anxiety were much improved.



LOGUE'S HONOUR
The King's speech therapist became Lionel Logue CVO, in 1944, for his distinguished personal service to George VI

YEAR OF THREE KINGS

In 1936, the Duke's life changed forever. On 20 January 1936, George V died and Edward VIII became King. Edward's modern outlook and charisma made him popular, but he was also reckless, and had little regard for the propriety that was key to his role. He fell in love with a twice-married American divorcée, Mrs Wallis Simpson, and insisted that he should marry her. What's more, he hoped she could take the title of Queen, or at the very least, Her Royal Highness.

Within a year of his accession, this resulted in a full-scale constitutional crisis. Winston Churchill, a backbench MP in 1936, lobbied on behalf of Edward and Mrs Simpson, and in the process alienated the Duke and Duchess of York, who wanted the King to fulfil his duties and end this unsuitable relationship. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin was also against the marriage and, along with a variety of officials and authorities, he forced the King to choose between

ALAMY X3, GETTY X1, MOVIE STILLS X1

"*The King's Speech* makes the shy, awkward monarch a compelling character"

"I have a right to be heard. I have a voice!"

Before he becomes King or meets Logue, Firth's Duke of York hesitates during his first, humiliating, radio-broadcast speech

LAID ON THICK

The Duke's stammer during the pivotal speech he gave at Wembley was **quite exaggerated** in the movie. Although **slow and full of pauses**, the actual address was not as cluttered with stutters as Firth's rendition.

the throne and love. Edward VIII abdicated on 11 December 1936. It was a shock to the country and a bitter blow to the Duke of York, who wept on his mother's shoulder for an hour when he learned he would be King.

From the moment he was crowned, George VI faced a lifetime of public engagements and speeches. Logue remained his coach and comforter. He helped him to prepare his voice and also amended and annotated speeches to make them easier to deliver.

PLOT POINT

The King's Speech climaxes with a speech delivered on the day war with Germany was declared, 3 September 1939. It suggests that this was a pivotal event, attended by high-ranking officials including Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Churchill, and that it ended with the King's appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. Actually, the speech was neither so pivotal nor so well-attended, but the scene represents the new duties the King faced, and his ability to rise to the occasion during this national crisis.

During WWII, the rhetoric and allure of national leaders – namely Churchill and Hitler – played an unprecedented role. In truth, George VI never approached their forceful delivery, but Logue's coaching enabled the King to speak to his subjects with gravitas and authority. This is the essence of the film, which, through beautiful direction and powerful acting, sheds light on one of Britain's lesser-known but most-dutiful monarchs.

Ones to watch: films about the Royals

The Queen
(Directed by Stephen Frears, 2006) The death of Princess Diana precipitates a crisis for the private and public lives of the Royal family.

Elizabeth
(Directed by Shekhar Kapur, 1998) Elizabeth I establishes her authority and identity in the early years of her reign.

The Private Life of Henry VIII
(Directed by Alexander Korda, 1933) A semi-comical, bawdy dramatisation of King Henry VIII's marriages and his struggle to produce an heir.

Cate Blanchett brings the young monarch to life in *Elizabeth*

THE BEAMING QUEEN
It's all smiles for Elizabeth II and her uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, while Princess Margaret sits behind with the cigarette holder. The royal party has driven to Badminton House, Gloucestershire, to watch the Olympic horse trials, eager to see who will represent the nation at the 1956 games. Two months later, they will gather again – at Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953 for Elizabeth's coronation.

GETTY

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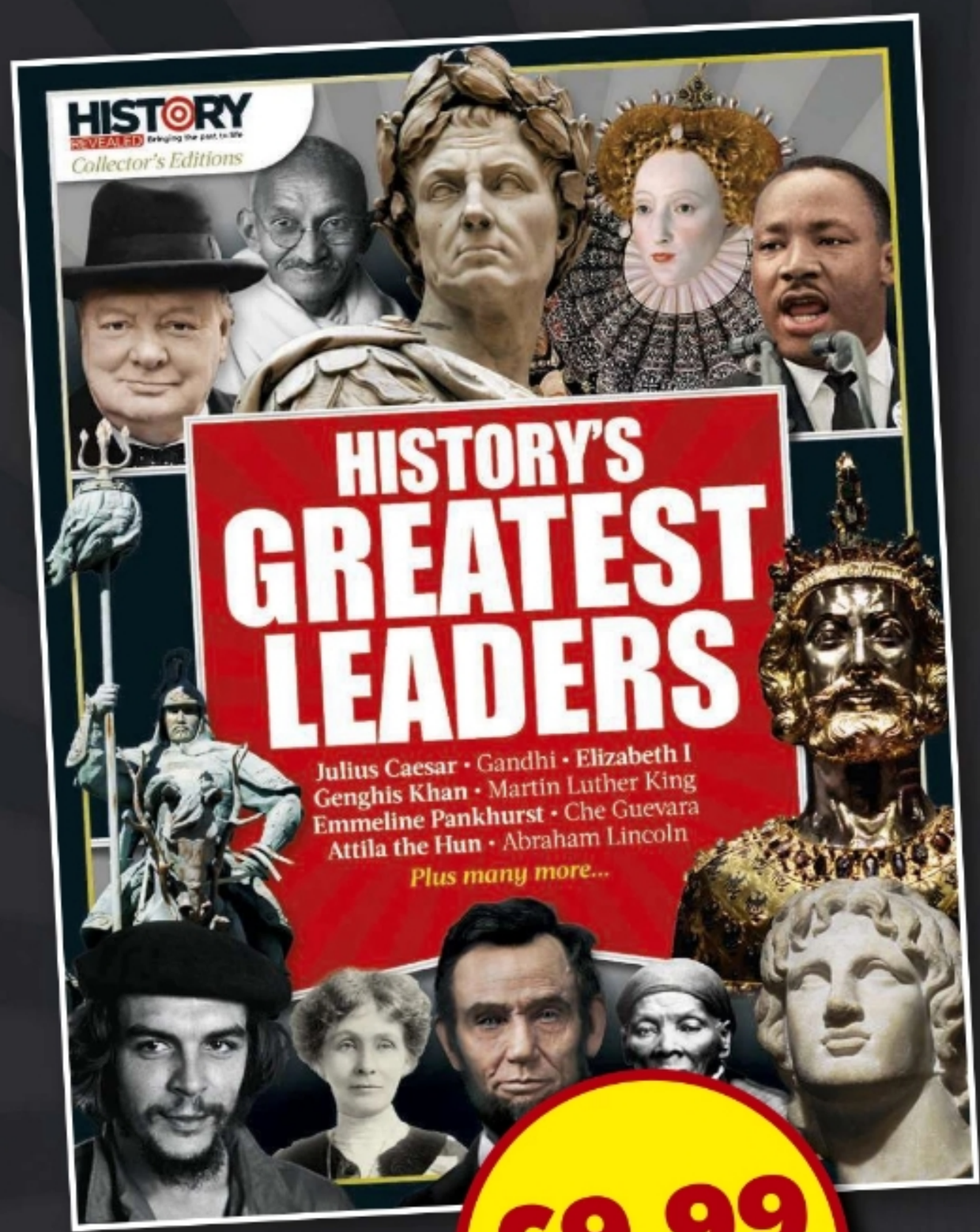

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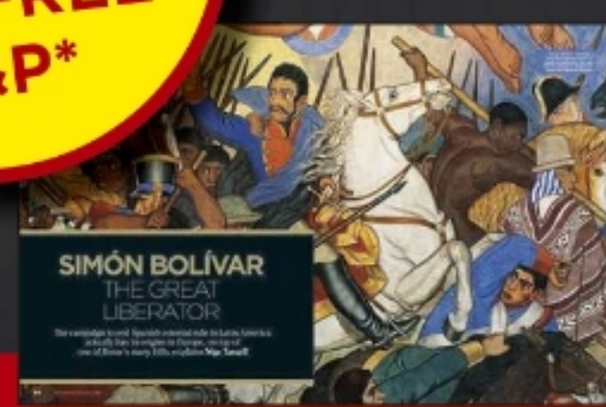

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